

ANNUS SECULARIS;
OR THE
BRITISH JUBILEE:

OR A
REVIEW OF THE ACT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,
APPOINTING

THE 5th OF NOVEMBER 1788,
AS an ANNIVERSARY-THANKSGIVING, in COM-
MEMORATION of the REVOLUTION in 1688;

WHEREIN ALSO,
The DOCTRINE and HISTORY; the ORIGIN, PROGRESS,
and TENDENCY of RELIGIOUS FESTIVALS, in An-
cient and Modern Times, both in a Religious and Mo-
ral View, are Particularly Considered.

By CALVINIANUS PRESBYTER.

*Bene præcipiunt qui vetent quidquam agere quod dubites æquum sit
an iniquum.*

CICERO.

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C H A P. I.

Present indifference about Ecclesiastical Affairs—Causes, and Danger of it.

IT is evident, that Ecclesiastical subjects are but little adapted to the taste of the present times, nor do they, in general, excite much public curiosity. We are no longer chargeable with the fault of allowing the Church to engross too much of our attention to the neglect of other affairs. The meeting of a Provincial Synod in the capital, we may find announced in the public registers of intelligence, and its business dispatched in almost as few words as the interesting article with which it may be immediately connected, 'That Miss Such-a-one ' is to perform in the Concert at St Cecilia's Hall next evening*! Nor do the proceedings of our National Assemblies attract that degree of attention or veneration which some time they were wont to do. Though the Supreme Ecclesiastical Court convenes with the wonted formalities, accompanied, as usual, with the representative of Majesty; though many dignified Doctors, and learned and eloquent Gentlemen are entered on its roll; though an honourable list of Elders, distinguished with titles, fortune, and splendor, adorn the benches; yet there is reason to doubt, if, at any time, now, it so deeply interests the minds of the people, or awakens such anxious hopes, or begets such confidence, or awful respect to its authority, as often it has done in times less learned or polite; when it was said to have been composed of men of noble and independent spirits, though perhaps of meaner estates; of blunt and vulgar, though free and honest speech; men of sober, nay, pious life, tho' in a home-spun suit; who were more ambitious of acting with integrity, than of gaining applause by pointed wit and railery. But whether this declension of Ecclesiastical dignity and influence, and this growing indifference about the interests of our Church, are chiefly to be ascribed to the character and conduct of those who have, for a long time past,

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had

* See *Edinburgh Evening Courant* for 8th May.

had the management of her public affairs, or to the change of taste, and the culpable spirit of the age, I shall not determine. We may, without injustice, impute it partly to both.

The people are but too prone to extremes. If at one time they appear to be affected with an intemperate heat, they will soon make a transition to excessive cold. Time was, when perhaps they were too much disposed to intermeddle in all Ecclesiastical business, to become keen partisans in every cause, and to dispute too boldly every question, as if every person considered himself as sufficiently qualified to bear up and settle the tottering pillars of the public weal. From such a spirit, censure, opposition, faction and disorder might be apprehended to arise. But little danger of this sort is now to be dreaded. Those who sit at the helm may keep themselves easy : There are few now inclined to scrutinize narrowly their proceedings ; to contest their authority, or arraign their decisions. From one motive or another, almost all are agreed to decline the attempt. The uniform steadiness, and unrelenting rigor of procedure, in maintaining the late adopted system of Ecclesiastical polity, particularly in the settlement of vacant parishes ; the high tone of domination assumed, and the avowed contempt, on all occasions, shown for what formerly were accounted the rights and liberties of the people, have at length produced this native effect of breaking, and, in a great measure, taming the spirit of the multitude, together with that of their advocates. The idea of ancient rights has, from year to year, become more and more faint, and is nearly obliterated. The unsuccessful event of former opposition, has wearied out a number, and discouraged them from acting, speaking, or thinking about such disagreeable matters at all. Not a few turn away from what they consider as scenes of injustice and oppression, with silent disgust, or marked aversion. As for those who have either chosen, or have been compelled to withdraw from immediate connection with the National Church, it cannot be expected that they should interest themselves deeply in her concerns, or retain any warm attachment to, or tender sympathy for a cruel mother. They behold her proceedings afar off without emotion ; as a mariner looks on a vessel belonging to another country, or to the enemy tossed on the ocean, in which he himself is not embarked.

Nor does the prevailing rage for the *ton*, and the rapid progress of the follies of fashion, prove friendly to religious taste,

taste, or any studies connected with it. The lilies of our land, who *neither toil nor spin*, can never endure to be transplanted from a *Theatre-royal* to a *Church-aisle*; or from a gay Ball-room to the Venerable Assembly. Such a change of air and soil would make them sicken, shrink, and die. Every body that pretends to politeness and the fashion, (and who does not?) will surely find a thousand more agreeable objects to engross his thoughts and occupy his time. A new song, a dancing bear, or a squeaking pig, will carry it against all the plodding business, sacred or civil, in the kingdom. A Play-bill will be perused with avidity, and not one letter lost, while Assembly-news will be read in short. To such the minutes of a birth-night, or installation-ball, a new fringe, or a new feather, with all the childish and fantastic punctilios of modish dress, gaudy and evanescent as the flowers of the season, will appear more interesting, as well as entertaining, than the administration of the affairs of a National Church, and all the acts and revolutions contained in the Ecclesiastical annals, either before or since the Reformation.

Nor doth this frivolous taste alone divert the attention from running out into this channel. The phrenzy for State-politics has contributed not a little to produce the same effect. For a long time past, our zeal for these has been so keen and hot, that it has almost consumed the other. Those who can pretend to very little skill in theological controversies, and are no adepts in settling the debates of churchmen, can yet very modestly sustain themselves competent judges of the councils of the cabinet, of the best administration, and the various debates in Parliament; nor are they afraid to determine the controverted rights of jarring nations, and to draw the intricate line between royal prerogative and the subject's liberties. There is not a tippling-house, a barber's shop, or shepherd's hut, but is now filled with staunch patriots and politicians, who are busy adjusting the balance of treaties; deciding upon war or peace;—emancipating nations from slavery, and predicting and fixing the fate of empires. Were there no proper objects, or domestic interests, about which they might employ their patriotic ardor and abilities, without making such excursions, they might well be indulged. But we are so much accustomed to look and range abroad, that we hardly allow ourselves a moment to deliberate on our own situation at home. It is surely unwise to exhaust ourselves

selves in foreign expeditions against enemies, or evils at a distance, overlooking those that may be ready to break in upon ourselves, or that may already be actually ravaging our own territories. It may be laudable, on proper occasions, to vindicate the cause of humanity at large, and to debate or fight for the liberty and independence of others; but we ought not surely to become indifferent to the preservation of our own. We may be solicitous about political liberty and commercial interests, but not at the expence of more sacred rights, and of richer treasures. I mean, and will speak it plainly out, that all the political questions and controversies of the past, or of the present day; all revolutions of courts, kingdoms, and colonies, so far as they only affect the temporal interests of men, are trivial affairs, when compared with those which belong to the Kingdom of the Redeemer in the earth. The gains which flow into the most flourishing marts in Europe, the treasures of the Indies, East and West, and all the American world added to them, are light as air, when laid in the balance with our holy Faith, our Consciences, and our Souls.

If dipping too far into Ecclesiastical affairs be foolish, fruitless and vexatious, the disputes and politics of this world will not make amends to those who exchange the one for the other. What can they see but endless intrigues, and the struggles of party and faction. One set of opinions in vogue to-day and exploded to-morrow. Ministers and measures applauded one year, and abandoned the next. Flattering prospects and chimerical hopes now rise, and then vanish. A rash and precipitant cry to war, is soon succeeded by as precipitant and eager a cry for peace. The cant of politicians is, of all others, the most nauseous, and the *Shibboleth* of courtiers the most variable. Among these, interest or ambition perpetually controul principle, and govern all actions. What have the good people of Scotland derived from their forward interference with English politics and parties? Have they not *sown the wind, and reaped the whirlwind*. While they have been fondly feeding their imaginations with ideal prospects of honour, dominion, or wealth, which they were never destined to enjoy, have they not rushed headlong into extravagant, and often ruinous adventures, and some times mustered men to slaughter, captivity, or exile? Let them learn to beware of this pestiferous *influenza*, and relinquish ideas, schemes, and enterprises,

prizes, which tend only to disappointment and shame, and will pierce them through with many sorrows.

We have enjoyed a long tract of domestic tranquillity; and Ecclesiastical business has been going on, for some time, in a settled and uniform train. In such a situation, people are most ready to be lulled asleep; when innovations may steal upon them unawares, and they be stripped of their privileges by little and little. It is in times of greater commotion, when new settlements are to be made; when sudden and violent changes are proposed; or some striking incidents are occurring, that the minds of all are agitated and heated. Then all are eager after information about what is transacted, and watching, with careful and jealous eye, over every public measure. But nothing violent lasts long: Nor have many the patience and perseverance to accompany more sober and ordinary movements; nor the steadiness to trace down the proceedings of a century; to compare the past with the present; to discern the tendency of calmer operations; or mark the progress of slow and silent mutations. But while men sleep, the enemy sows the tares. It is usually in this gradual, and almost imperceptible manner, that the liberties of a people are in greatest hazard of being lost, and that corruptions become rooted, and acquire stability. Many a city that would have bid a defiance to a forcible assault, hath been reduced by sap, blockade, or famine. When suspicious and offensive measures are in hand, the less noise that is made about them, the better. A skilful projector and innovator will always proceed with caution and silence, lest he should betray prematurely his schemes, and alarm those whose views or interest may engage them in defeating them.

When all the measures of rulers, civil or ecclesiastic, are indiscriminately and implicitly acquiesced in, and when free enquiry and discussion is at an end, this is ever an unfavourable symptom in any society. Free debate, a moderate, and sometimes an unreasonable opposition, is some evidence of a sound and vigorous constitution. When these are no more, liberty must be in its last stage of consumption. An abject and stupid silence, is an attendant on the most absolute slavery. The tyranny of that ancient Monarch of the East was become complete, when he could boast, that he had removed the bounds of the people, and robbed their treasures, seizing the riches of the earth as

one gathereth the eggs of a nest, and yet there was not one that *moved the wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped* *.

In hopes that we are not yet altogether sunk into such an abject state in Scotland; in confidence that the spark of religious public spirit is not yet totally extinct among a number, I have ventured to submit to the public, the following considerations, relative to the Ecclesiastical proceedings of the present year, which is intended, it seems, to be an year of peculiar distinction from others, as the *secular anniversary* of that memorable æra of British liberty, the Revolution. The act appointing this being rather a novelty in the Presbyterian Church, deserves a fuller discussion than it appears yet to have undergone: As it has occasioned, which is a little surprising, little or no debate in any stage of its progress through the inferior or superior courts of the National Church, and has passed with unanimity, some extrajudicial examination of the subject may be more excusable and needful; especially as being now enjoined by national authority, the observance or non-observance of it is made a practical question to all.

This measure, from the first proposal of it, appeared to the writer somewhat suspicious; but, for a time, his sentiments about it were rather vague and indeterminate. Having been gradually led into a train of reflections and reading on the subject, he freely imparts the result of them. If his views are found different from those of the Venerable Assembly, and the generality of the nation, this is not to be ascribed to an affectation of singularity, or a love of censure and contradiction. He means only to exercise an unalienable right belonging to every Christian and Protestant; to try the doctrines, and to examine the decisions of any church, and of its ministers. The satisfaction of his own mind, and the resolution of his own doubts, was the first object in view in the enquiry: Others, perhaps, may need the like satisfaction. In a case of this kind, nothing ought to be imposed, but every man must be allowed to judge for himself, and should be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Hanc veniam petimus, damusque vicissim.

If any can furnish him with better information, and by that kind of authority that can alone pass current among rational Protestants, by arguments consonant to Scripture, and the Reformation-principles of this Church, convince him

* Isa. x. 14.

him that his views and scruples on this head are not well founded, he will stand corrected, and will not reckon that he has missed altogether his main design.

C H A P. II.

Propriety of Public Thanksgivings—It belongs to Ecclesiastical and not Civil Rulers to appoint them—The Ordinary Practice of the Church of Scotland, in this matter, Considered and Blamed.

THE appointment of a day for a solemn National Thanksgiving, has, at first view, such an appearance of piety, that it may seem strange, that any, except persons of no religion, should entertain a doubt, whether it ought to be religiously observed. Public expressions of gratitude and praise for signal mercies, as well as public confession of sin and humiliations under divine strokes, are so consonant to the principles of religion, both natural and revealed, so expressly and frequently inculcated by precepts, and recommended by examples in scripture, and so agreeable to the laudable constitutions and practice of this, and all other reformed churches, that no good man will quarrel with appointments for that purpose, in a general and abstract view. It is every way becoming the character of an Ecclesiastical Court, to investigate the causes, and point out the occasions of them; to mark the ever-varying aspects and operations of Providence; and to call the people of their charge to a suitable recognisance of the government of the Supreme Disposer of events, and to review the works of God and their own ways. It has rather been a complaint among the serious, for more than half a century past, that such appointments have been so unfrequent in the National Church,—when a variety of occurrences, both prosperous and calamitous, have presented proper occasions. Her ministers have been suspected of inclining more to the side of neglect and aversion, than to the other of superstitious excess, or a disposition to be religious overmuch. The propriety of such an act as that of last Assembly, then, cannot be justly questioned, unless there be something peculiar in the reason or manner of this appointment, to render it exceptionable. It may

may admit of a doubt, whether it proceeds on the same principle with similar acts which formerly have been made; or ought to be made; and be entirely agreeable to the general and ordinary rule admitted by the Church of Scotland for regulating such observances:—Or, whether it be not a sort of novelty and innovation, in the Presbyterian worship, proceeding on a principle long ago renounced and condemned, both in her doctrine and practice on this subject. Some may be disposed to carry their doubt a little further, and to question, whether it was not some such peculiarity in the cause, spirit, and design of this appointment, that made the General Assembly to deviate so far from their usual line of procedure for some time past, and to shew such forwardness and unanimity in marking out a day for religious observance, in this instance, above all others.

It is rather out of the ordinary course, that the Assembly should have proceeded to appoint the ensuing thanksgiving by their own proper authority, without waiting for a mandate from St James's, or a formula prescribed to them by a Lord Chancellor, or his Grace of Canterbury. But neither will this, surely, be any ground of exception to the observance of it, with any friend of the Presbyterian constitution, in connection with them: On the contrary, it is a circumstance will be highly agreeable to them, to see the National Court, instead of meeting annually to exchange a few compliments, and to re-echo back the language of the throne, or merely to dine, and chat for some days together, in a good humoured SOCIAL way, re-assuming a right, and exercising a power, which undoubtedly belongs to them, though by many considered, for a long time, as, in effect, lost, having been for such a series of years, abandoned and resigned up, without resistance to the civil rulers. Though the intrinsic powers of Ecclesiastical Courts, to appoint such days, and specify the cause, according as they judge needful, be a principle of this and other Reformed Churches, and often asserted; yet, too general a compliance with the contrary practice has prevailed, even in cases not excusable by necessity. Ever since the Revolution this right has been perpetually invaded, and insensibly dying away. At first it excited a struggle, and was not let go but with reluctance; the arbitrary encroachments of the civil power in this, having been considered by the better part, as a grievance: And methods for a time were tried to palliate the robbery,
and

and to conciliate the minds of people to it, by conjoining the Church-acts with the royal edicts: Till at length, the struggle and the jealousy, on the part of the Church, subsided, and the idea of right, or of grievance in the matter, is almost entirely vanished. How few instances can be produced of their having enjoined either national fasts or thanksgivings, by their own sole authority; whether there has been war or peace, victories or defeats, plenty or famine, or pestilence in the land, except when the Court was leading the way, sounding the alarm, and convocating the solemn assemblies? This has been considered as an instance of a tame and disgraceful servility, and, in some sort, an unwarrantable surrender of their Ecclesiastic independence *.

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Nor

* The following quotation will show the general sense of honest Presbyterians, as late as 1724, when two ministers were found fault with, for not observing a thanksgiving appointed by the King. "We apprehend," say they, "that they who are sincerely and heartily of our communion, do look upon it as a grievance, that we have not Church-appointments of those solemnities, and that their obedience to their State-commands is attended with regret: They earnestly desire, that the matter were ordered otherwise, and that there were no bar upon the Church's exercising its full power in this affair." After giving their reasons for not observing a certain Friday's fast, and a thanksgiving appointed by Government on the 25th of April preceding, among others, "lest they should have symbolized with the Church of England, in their superstitious observation of days," Friday being a fast-day, *alias* a fish-day, as settled by the law of England; and the 25th of April being a festival dedicated to St Mark in the calendar, they proceed to state their scruples about the appointments themselves, in regard of the authority enacting them: "Because we fear the Magistrates' appointments are privative in our case, and that there is some design gradually to deprive our Assemblies of their intrinsic power to appoint fasts and thanksgivings, wherewith they are vested by the glorious Head of the Church." To evince that their fears were not groundless, they adduce the following facts: "1. It has often been proposed and urged, that some court might be appointed, or some judicatory in being, empowered to correspond in Scotland, with the representatives of this Church, about fasts and thanksgivings, but it could not be obtained. 2. A thanksgiving for the happy defeat of the rebels under the Earl of Mar, was proclaimed with sound of trumpets at the cross of Edinburgh, while the General Assembly was sitting. 3. After the Commission of an Assembly had enacted a fast, upon account of the plague, and referred it to the several remote Presbyteries, to appoint their respective days, the King not having as yet returned from his foreign dominions, how soon his Majesty came home, in a week after, he, by advice of his Privy-council, appointed a fast for the same cause, which having been so very quickly after the former, made people think we would have had none by the Church's authority, had his Majesty come home sooner. The State-act took not the least notice of the Church's appointment, though the act had passed very soon before: Other instances might be condescended upon, if needful. 4. It is known, whatever proposals have been made to our General Assembly for sundry years, by Presbyteries and Synods, and however earnestly they were solicited to appoint days for fasting or giving thanks, and how

Nor is it without reason, that so many have considered it in this light. Though there can be no reasonable objection against the State making overtures of this sort to Ecclesiastical courts, or giving its concurrence with their acts to that effect, or upon application being made to the executive powers, that they nominate a day for the better preservation of external order in the observance of them; or if they should, in some extraordinary circumstances, even take it on them to exercise such a power, as where no church authority is settled; yet it can, by no means, be allowed to be a branch of the civil Magistrate's office, nor be exercised by him, in ordinary cases, as his proper and exclusive right. This would be, in so far, a confounding the civil and spiritual authority together, and an encroachment on the peculiar business of the Church: And it is most essential to liberty and wise legislation, that the two powers be kept perfectly distinct. It is the express doctrine of our Confession, that "the Lord Jesus hath appointed a government in the hand of church-officers, distinct from the civil magistrate:—that the civil magistrate may not assume to himself the administration of the word or sacraments, or the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven;—but that it belongeth to Synods and councils ministerially to determine controversies of faith, and cases of conscience, and to set down rules and directions for the better ordering of the public worship of God, and government of his church*." The matter we speak of is, doubtless, of this sort; and so, by the authorized doctrine of this Church, falls not within the regular compass of that authority which is merely secular. It was a duty, under the Levitical law, to burn incense and offer sacrifices, yet only the Lord's appointed ministers might lawfully do so; and when once a king of Judah took a censor, and approached

"how pressing soever the occasions were; yet these desires were not gone into, nor could it ever be obtained that such overtures should be brought into the Assembly itself, that this Church might have their deliverance. We cannot entertain such uncharitable thoughts concerning the overseers of our Church, as to call in question their willingness to use this necessary and lovely part of the trust committed to them, were it not that they are straitened by the higher powers; in regard that, when we were a free nation, and our Assemblies were not entrenched upon in their liberties granted by their Sovereign Lord, they were in ordinary use of appointing these solemnities." *Reasons of Messrs James Hog and James Bathgate, offered to the Presbytery of Dunfermline, &c. p. 11, 12, &c.*

* *Confession of Faith*, ch. xxiii. 30. 31.

proached the altar, he was accosted in those words, *It appertaineth not to thee*; and for the intrusion he was smitten of Heaven. When civil rulers, at any time, assume any branch of Ecclesiastical dominion into their hands, and act as if they were official ministers in the kingdom of Christ, and enact obedience, in such instances, may not Christians be allowed to demand, by what authority they do these things? Who hath appointed them watchmen on Zion's walls, to *shew unto the house of Jacob their transgressions, and to the house of Judah their sins*; to give warning of approaching judgments, and suitable calls to repentance; and announce the time for spiritual weeping or rejoicing. The ministers of peace are the divine heralds, whose feet must appear on the mountains of Zion, bringing glad tidings; and to them it is also given in charge, to lead up the train of religious mourners; to *sanctify a fast, and to call a solemn assembly* *. If, through their negligence or unfaithfulness, the task is devolved over on those to whom it doth not immediately pertain, they, even they, have the greater sin. They must in such a case be specially interested in the solemn address delivered of old by a Prophet: "Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, when I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman; if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand.—Wo unto the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing," &c. †

Though ministers, as men and subjects, are under the controul of the laws of every commonwealth, equally with others, and owe all external homage to princes, yet are they not subordinate to them in their office, either as courts or individuals; they need not therefore to depend on royal edicts for their instructions, or to render their acts and administrations valid. The laws of the Redeemer, relating to his service and worship, are to be published in his great name alone; and it must appear somewhat odd, to such as are of any discernment in these matters, to see them proclaimed by Kings heralds, at market-crosses, and entrusted for their execution to Sheriffs, Bailiffs and Constables.

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* Joel ii. 15. 16. &c.

† Ezek. xxxiii. 3. &c.

The compliance of the Church of Scotland, in this matter, is more suspicious and reprehensible, in regard of the spring from whence these acts originate. They may justly be considered as the exercise of that Ecclesiastical Supremacy, which, by the laws of England (which now make part of the united constitution) is most absurdly and impiously bestowed upon the King, as a right inherent in the Crown; whereby he is declared to be the Head of the Church, and the Supreme Judge of all causes, as well as persons, Ecclesiastical, in his dominions. And it is well known, that an oath acknowledging this supremacy, is imposed on every member of the British Parliament and Privy-council, and others in office under the Crown. It is true indeed, that no branch of this usurped Antichristian power can be rightfully extended to Scotland; being equally contrary to the institutions of Christianity, and the principles of the Church of this land, established by law. Some of the grievous acts investing our Princes with this supremacy, under which the land long groaned, have been expressly repealed. But by our long intercourse and constitutional connection with England, we are in danger of gradually forgetting our distinctive privileges, and by a voluntary practical subjection, to be guilty of a tacit acknowledgment of this usurpation, a resignation of a most important part of our Ecclesiastical liberties and testimony, and of opening a door for a train of innovations and arbitrary impositions.

Were these religious exercises prescribed by any of the same religious profession, and in the same Church-state with us, the inconsistency would not be so glaring. But every one knows that the King of Great Britain has no Ecclesiastical connection with the Presbyterian Church, but is incorporated with another of a very opposite constitution, even one the most superstitious and corrupt of any who take the denomination of Protestant, to which we owe no kind of subordination, and with which we have disclaimed fellowship. But this Church our Sovereign is not only bound by his coronation-oath to maintain, but with it he must always hold communion. The Ecclesiastical Supremacy is what chiefly unites, supports and pervades by its influence, the whole fabric of Episcopacy. It gives the Hierarchy its being and form; and diffuses life and vigour through all its administration. Prelates are its creatures, and at the same time direct the royal councils and conscience. Herein do the lines of union and communion, among the different parts

parts of that society, meet and centre. If we consent to hold of one common Ecclesiastical authority with them, do we not actually incorporate ourselves as one spiritual body with them, and practically homologate one of their most essential corruptions, which virtually draws after it all the rest. It is surely for religious purposes that the duty in question must be enjoined, and in a religious capacity alone can it be performed. Therefore to hold of the same head in Ecclesiastical government and worship, can be considered in no other light than a sort of Ecclesiastical conformity and fellowship. It would be absurd to pretend, that a Protestant Church might receive a Bull from the Pope, without recognising his supremacy, or entering into any fellowship with the Church of Rome.

These things considered, it may appear surprising, that Presbyterians should have been so obsequious in this matter, inattentive to the import and consequences of their compliance:—or that any should be threatened with the royal displeasure for not obtemperating such edicts, or be compelled by any authority whatever to do so, or be subjected to vexatious prosecutions, and punished with fines and imprisonments for refusing, as has been sometimes the case in our own times. How all this should be done, without violating the legal securities given to our religion, even by the Revolution and Union settlements, however defective they might be, must be left to others to answer.

Ever since the days of the *Tudors* and the *Stewarts*, the Ecclesiastical Supremacy has been a darling branch of regal prerogative: The *noli me tangere*, which it was lese-majesty to hurt; the Dagon, which all who enter the threshold of the National Churches have been required to adore; or like that gigantic image consecrated in the plain of Dura, before which all ministers of State, governors and captains, all clergy and laity, at what time they have heard the sound of harp, dulcimer, and all the instruments of court music, have been commanded to fall down, under pain of their allegiance. A hardy race of Puritan and Presbyterian confessors, disdaining such unworthy homage, dared to condemn the summons, and to attack the idol. It is high time it were totally demolished. Till every limb, even to the smallest finger of it, be broken and beat to dust, neither the civil or religious liberties of British Protestants can be completely secured.

But,

But, at this time, there is no cause to quarrel with the Venerable Assembly on this subject. May we not rather congratulate them on the reassumption of their proper power, of which they have been nearly denuded? Especially if, in future, they shew themselves equally forward to exert it, as watchful guardians of the spiritual interests of their flock; nor henceforth pretend a scruple to enjoin their people to rejoice or mourn before the Lord, as often as they may have a proper occasion, whether their civil rulers bid them, or forbear.

C H A P. III.

Laudable Spirit and Design of the Promoters of the Commemoration-act.—No sufficient justification of it.—Like Pleas for manifold Superstitions.—No Obligation in point of Religion, to commemorate particular Events in this manner.—Absurdity of holding the contrary, more especially in Presbyterians.

SOME, disposed to put the most unfavourable construction on the proceedings of the National Assembly, might allege, that the appointment of the ensuing Anniversary was secretly designed, as an attack on the constitution of this Church,—a plot hatched by some political heads, for introducing innovations into its worship, as has already been done in other respects; that it may be the effect of a concerted plan for bringing about a projected uniformity between the two parts of the United Kingdom; and in order to prepare the way for the restoration of holidays, an experiment was first to be made of one appropriated to a very popular event, to discover the temper of the nation, that Presbyterians, by a stratagem, might, before they are aware, be induced, of their own accord, to adopt what could never be got peaceably obtruded upon them by the exertions of authority.

For my part, I can see no reason for viewing the matter in this light. I cannot, for a moment, suppose, that any who proposed or promoted the measure, politicians or no politicians, could ever dream of such a wild project. If so, they would be just such wise political heads as formerly lost their heads, for advising or attempting such another foolish
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and ruinous project. Whatever may be said of the tendency of the act, we may venture to acquit the intention of the actors. I give them credit, that their motives were pure, even as the spirit, which apparently breathes in it, is laudable. It was surely nothing but a deep consciousness of the grandeur and importance of the subject; the contemplation of a series of wonderful Providences, operating to a most desirable deliverance, singular in its nature, and permanent in its effects;—the force of pious and grateful sentiments, awakened by an enlarged reflection on the dark abyss of slavery, and the complicated scenes of horror and wretchedness from which Britain was extricated by that memorable Revolution, compared with the sweets of liberty, and the profusion of blessings which have succeeded,—surely nothing worse, nothing else than this could produce the generous motion. I see here a noble flame of liberty, combining with devotion, seeking for an opportunity of expanding itself, in the most public and solemn manner, before God and the world. In this respect, it does honour to the principles and feelings of those with whom it originated, or who have given it their hearty support. Nay farther, it is readily granted, that the event referred to warrants sufficiently such feelings, and demands from every British heart, congenial sentiments of admiration and gratitude, and the warmest emotions of patriotic ardor and religious praise; and must do so while Britain is a nation: Though I will not attempt the historical detail, nor anticipate the panegyric honours preparing for the celebration of that day.

What then? must the measure, therefore, be above suspicion, and liable to no sort of objection? are good intentions and pious appearances alone to determine actions to be holy and religious? must warm emotions and strong feelings, how generous soever they be, preclude all reasoning, and be allowed to overbear our judgment, and blindly hurry us on to actions without due deliberation? If so, then must our religion, from that moment, cease to be a reasonable service: Enthusiasm and superstition must assume their reign: And all the indiscretions and extravagancies of devotees, in every age, will admit of the best apology. To some such cause, may be traced up all the train of sacred rites and usages which compose the Pagan, Rabbinical, or Papal system. Which of these did not, at first, owe their birth to the warmth of imagination, and the impulse of feelings,

ings, apparently noble and devout. If we are not to try the spirits, but believe in the sanctity of every thing that may be made to wear the garb of devotion,—Then, *Hail, Holy Crucifix ! Adorable Images ! Venerable Tombs ! Ave Maria ;—Ora pro nobis !* For every rite, some will be at no loss to find a *Rationale*, even for the most superstitious and idolatrous. He will be abundantly convinced of this, who reads Plutarch *de Iside ;—Jamblichus de Mysteriis ;—Durand's Rationale Officiorum Divinorum ;—Sparrow's Rationale of the Liturgy ;* or Bisse's *Beauty of Holiness in the Common Prayer ;* amongst innumerable others.

“ No harm is meant—Nothing superstitious is intended.” It may be so : But as little was intended by those primitive Christians, who first began to assemble for acts of worship, and holy rejoicing in cemeteries, and around the tombs of Martyrs. They did not yet entertain a thought of invoking the deceased as their advocates,—of burning incense, and singing Litanies to their praise. Neither did those priests of Jupiter at Lystra mean any harm, but followed the first sallies of their wondering minds, and the honest transports of their grateful hearts, at seeing the benefits conferred by Paul and Silas, when they brought forth oxen and garlands, and would have done sacrifice unto them, saying, *the Gods are come down to us in the shape of Men.* “ The intention is pious,”—So was Saul's, when he transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and reserved and devoted a whole herd of cattle for a sacrifice. So also was theirs, who first kept stationary fasts, feasts and vigils : And theirs who first retired from the world to live solitary in the desarts,

Remote from men, with God they pass their days.
Prayer all their business, all their pleasure praise.

The truth is, the perversion or excess of the best things is ready to produce the worst ; and every species of superstition has flowed from principles, seemingly innocent, if not laudable ; and though the beginnings have been small, the latter end has greatly increased. If once human passions are let loose, and the caprice of self-devised acts of what they may term devotion, be indulged, it will acknowledge no limits, and knows no discrimination. But should the fervors of men's devotion be ever so warm, if it be not divinely warranted, and regulated in all its acts, whether as to object, matter, manner, or time, it is nothing better than a spark

spark of our own kindling: A strange fire that cannot burn with acceptance on the holy altar.

The injudicious devotee will know no difference betwixt an idol and the true God:—He will have equal regard to the divine commandments and the traditions of men; and his devout affections are equally raised in the use of means and modes prescribed by the mere will of man, as those appointed in the Scripture. He will be no less sincere in saying his *ave*, and numbering them on beads, than in repeating his *pater*;—in addressing a prayer to God or to Gabriel; and will be equally affected when kneeling to bread, and worshipping the Divinity. A Sabbath day and a Saint's day will be to him equally holy. The ringing of a bell will command his devotion as effectually as if an angel spoke. The sight of a painted Magdalene, will make him smite on his breast, and cry, *Peccavi!* more readily perhaps than hearing all the curses of the law. The memory of a fictitious Saint will be as edifying to him, as the memory of the Saviour; and the bleeding wounds of *St Francis* open the source of his tears, as easily as the most pathetic preaching of Christ crucified, or reading the Evangelical history of his passion. Those who look into the devotional books of the Romanists, will find, perpetually, a strange jumble of religious and superstitious sentiments and emotions, falsely called piety, every thing wears the specious and delusive air of extraordinary, superlative, hyperbolical devotion.

Not to travel so far off, our neighbours, who have from them learned to observe days, months and years, in their attempts to vindicate them, are perpetually ringing the chimes of their pious institution,—pious ends,—pious tendency;—extolling them as a sort of Christian creeds and catechisms,—spiritual almanacks,—pious memorials, and the most powerful helps and incitements to devotion*.

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* " The sanctification of days and times is a token of that thankfulness, and a part of that public honour which we owe to God for admirable benefits, whereof it doth not suffice that we keep a secret kalendar, taking thereby our private occasions, as we list ourselves to think how much God hath done for all men, but the days which are chosen out to serve as public memorials of such his mercies, ought to be clothed with those outward robes of holiness, whereby their difference from other days may be made sensible.—Generally, therefore, touching feasts in the Church of Christ, they have that profitable use whereof St Augustine speaketh, *By festival solemnities, and set days, we dedicate and sanctify to God the memory of his benefits, lest unthankful forgetfulness thereof should creep* " upon

Many put this colouring upon them, and dignify them thus highly, for want of better arguments; while others, we doubt not, do it sincerely through conscience of the days, and

" upon us in course of time.—That, which the head of all Philosophers hath said of women, if they be good, the half of the commonwealth is happy wherein they are, the same we may fitly apply to times, well to celebrate these religious and sacred days, is to spend the flower of our time happily. They are the splendor and outward dignity of our religion, forcible witnesses of ancient truth, provocations to the exercises of all piety, shadows of our endless felicity in heaven, on earth, everlasting records and memorials, wherein they, which cannot be drawn to hearken to that we teach, may only, by looking upon that we do, in a manner read whatsoever we believe." Hooker's *Ecclesiast. Pol.* B. v. § 70. 71.

Festorum recurrens meditatio est veluti catecheseos Christiana inculcatio. Forbes, *Irenic*, l. i. c. 7.

" Most of them (English festivals) have relation to our blessed Lord and his Apostles, so that from the very design of the festival, the hard handed artisan may learn the name and meaning of some article of his creed, as Bishop Taylor speaks, (*Pref. to Collect. of Offices*, § 36.) and by such anniversary remembrances of his faith, may at once help his memory and devotion.—In our kalendar, the festivals are set down with such choice, as Bishop Hall somewhere hath noted, that the ruaner sort, by skill, in their almanack, may be taught their Christian faith. The ends propounded in our Church, why we celebrate the memory of Saints, are most just and unexceptionable, namely, that we may bless God for their gifts and graces which have been eminent in them, which we magnify and celebrate, that we may more chearfully be enlivened to imitate them, and breathe after the glory they possess." Dr Puller's *Moderation of the Church of England*, ch. 9.

Q. How ought we to observe the festivals of the Church?

A. " In such a manner as may answer the end for which they were appointed; that God may be glorified by an humble and grateful acknowledgment of his mercies, and that the salvation of our souls may be advanced by firmly believing the mysteries of our redemption, and by imitating the examples of those primitive patterns of piety that are set before us." *Excellency of the Church of England*, p. 110.

" There is no reason I think that any day of religion, no reason that this (Christmas) in particular, should be abolished, only because some people are so wicked as to turn it into a day of intemperance and sensuality, because the abolishing the day, would not alone serve to prevent the wickedness that is acted upon it;—in the mean time, they that are devoutly inclined, would, by the day's being laid aside, be deprived of an excellent means of religion and help to their devotion, and that great mystery of godliness, which we now commemorate, God manifest in the flesh, would more seldom be had in remembrance and reflected upon; and, in time to come, (this annual memorial of it being destroyed and taken away,) would be in danger of being quite forgotten." *The lawfulness and right manner of keeping Christmas and other festivals; a sermon by Dr Blackhall.*

Thus, according to the Right Rev. Bishop of Chester, the perpetuity of Christianity in the world, depends on the perpetual celebration of Christmas. For a specimen of the more rapturous sort of festival-devotion, the two following meditations may suffice. The one on *St Matthew's day*, in the 1685.

" *Solibus æstivis non consule computat annum*; was the character of the happy man of old. But our happiness is of another sort, and our computation

and from a habitual association of ideas, that have no necessary connection, and from the devout effects they have felt occasionally resulting from their observation. A Dodwell would rather sacrifice his health, and even life itself, than profane his Lent, or omit his weekly fasts appointed by the divine authority of the Church of England. What "Devout companions" have her religious sons emitted for her fasts and festivals? What manuals of devotion and volumes of homilies appropriated to the sanctification of these days? The Sabbath, among that Holiday-generation, stands as one among the multitude, and by not a few of them, is viewed as a star of lesser magnitude.

If a commemoration-day, such as is now proposed, be necessary on the score of piety, and for the maintaining a due and grateful sense on the minds of people, of past favours, then a long train of others, on the same ground, must be found necessary, at least justifiable. Public benefits have
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"tation different. O happy soul! when the offices of religion do measure out to thee the time and the year; and devotion in its decent dress is thy kalendar.—Happy soul! to whom each new week is welcome, and known not by the almanack, or the outward face of the year, but by the grace it proposes to thy meditation and practice in its collect, while thou dost join with the whole Church, in making this theme thy study and thy care: when each month is known to thee, not by the old heathen name it bears, but the blessed Saints it commemorates, welcoming with joy their holy festivals. O happy souls, who unite in this blessed study! may my soul enter into your secrets, and dwell with you in this sacred exercise! &c.

The other on the festival of the Nativity,—“Lord, thou hast made this blessed festival seem to us, as the forty days after the resurrection did to the disciples; when every day thou didst present thyself to them, sometimes in one form, sometimes in another, now to this company, now to that; reviving their hearts by turns, and cheering them with thy gracious presence, and filling their souls with joy and comfort. So art thou, now pleased to be continually, as it were, coming to and fro among us,—sometimes in this assembly, sometimes in that; and in all places dost thou meet us at every turn: like a gracious master of a feast, that goes to and fro among his guests, to see that all be served, all abound, and none want; ordering one while wine, another while music, another while choicer messes, and calling upon all to be welcome, and make good cheer. So graciously busy and kind hast thou been among us in this holy time. Dost thou not fulfil thy word, that thy delight is with the children of men? O let our delight be with thee, while thou art thus graciously pleased to be with us. Let us slip no opportunity of meeting thee, where-ever thou art pleased to be present in thy holy ordinances. Find a way, good Lord, to present thyself to the souls of thy poor servants, who enjoy not these blessed opportunities at this time, who see nothing of the festivity of this happy season; break into their souls by the immediate working of thy Spirit; and let them rejoice with thee alone, since they cannot, with the gladness of thy people. Let their inward joy be so much the greater, as they are deprived of means of outwardly expressing it.” *Exemplary Life and Character of J. Bonnel, Esq;* p. 140, &c.

never been wanting in the Church at any time. So numerous they have been, that none can reckon them up in order : Some of them indeed more signal than others, and some of them of more general concern to Christians, others more local and temporary. Many of these anniversary-days, instituted in the Church of Rome, and continued in some Protestant Churches, are appropriated to the perpetual remembrance of real and unquestionable blessings *. Yet, it is not admitted by the Reformed, that, because such days are not kept by them, therefore they are more defective in gratitude, or chargeable with suffering these benefits to fall into oblivion : Nay, they scruple not to accuse those who observe them with an idea of sanctity affixed to them, with an unnecessary, unwarranted, hurtful, and superstitious practice. According to the spirit of the commemoration-act, and the reasoning used for it, how can any do so ? Why find fault with those who have piously allotted days to the memory of the mysteries of redemption, some of them from a very early time, and continued through the successive ages of the Church ? Or if these were to be reckoned antiquated, why should not their room have been supplied before this time, by others relating to events of a more recent date ? although upon the principle of anniversary solemnities, the older and more remote any event becomes, the stronger is the reason, and the greater the necessity of such memorials of them, as
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* Bellarmine says on this subject, "*Nostrorum finis primarius, est agnoscere Dei beneficia, propter quæ festa singula instituta sunt.*" An author in the 5th century, in a sermon against the profane festival of the first day of the year, declaiming against the custom of new-year gifts, says, "the liberties of that day have no rational ground :—What name can be given to the expence of that day ? the Church gives a reason for all the feasts it celebrates. It keeps the feast of Christmas, because, upon that day, God made himself known unto men. At Candlemas, it rejoiceth, because we are drawn out of the obscurity of darkness wherein we lay. We celebrate with joy, pomp and alacrity, the day of the resurrection, for as much as this day represents unto us the immortality which we are to enjoy. These are the reasons which the Church hath to keep feasts, and there are the like for celebrating of all the rest : but what reason can be given for the festival of new-year's day, and for the profusion then practised ? O folly ! O impertinence !" *Asterius Amasenus in Dupin's Eccles. Writers.*

An English prelate, in his sermon on Christmas, already quoted, says, "the blessing and the benefit which we now commemorate, was an infinitely greater benefit than the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt ; than the destruction of Pharaoh and his host in the Red-sea ; or than the miraculous preservation of the Jews for 40 years in the wilderness ; so that, if they deserved to be kept in perpetual remembrance, by annual festivals, instituted in commemoration thereof, much more does this deserve to be in like manner remembered with joy and thankfulness. There was good reason therefore, that the Church should appoint some day or days in the year wherein this should be done." Blackhall *ut supra.*

the danger becomes greater in proportion of losing the remembrance of them, to prevent which is the end of their institution. It seems piety has been rather languishing than flourishing since the æra of the Reformation; especially in the Church of Scotland. Instead of our having got the start of our neighbours in Reformation, it must be owned, we are yet some ages behind them. Presbyterians must have been till now a very ungrateful and ungodly set indeed, who banished, without exception, such sacred memorials of Christ; and did not retain so much as one relic of past times and transactions;—nor left one monument standing consecrated to the *Sanctis Manibus* of any of the Apostles and Martyrs, which have been since the world began. After all their boasting, they have need to go to those whom they have been accustomed hitherto to condemn, or ridicule, in order to learn what devotion meaneth. The Episcopal Church is, at least, thirty days *per annum* richer in devotion than they: Besides the additional stock of, I know not, how many holy Vigils, Fish-days, Rogation-times, &c. If this be piety, though some other Christian Churches have done excellently, yet the Church of Rome excelleth them all.

If this be true piety, or the true way of expressing it, it must follow, either that we have begun too late to practise it; or if it be not, we have begun too soon. We have already done too much; or we have done, as yet, by far, too little in this kind. We are but mere upstarts and novices, just beginning to be instructed in the mystery of Holiday-piety! If this has not a shew of will-worship, it has, at least, of voluntary humility: highly flattering, no doubt, to a certain class of people in the earth; however degrading to ourselves, or disgraceful to the wisdom and religion of our Presbyterian Fathers, though many of them reputed Confessors and Martyrs too. What were they doing for above two centuries past, stupid and lukewarm men as they were! It seems they had not been duly regarding the doings of the Lord; or like the stubborn race of old, they did soon again forget his mighty works; because they appointed no such commemorations of them, ten, twenty, or a hundred years after date?

Will it be said, in apology for them, "That they had no such cause as we now have;—times are changed;—and a new thing has been done in the earth, and the former things shall no more come into mind."—Indeed,

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tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis,—whether to the better or the worse, upon the whole, let the knowing judge. But is it true, that the Divine mercies to the Christian world, have all along been so few or so small? Has there been no event, since the dawn of Christianity, sufficiently interesting and beneficial to the whole Church, to call for so much as one Christian Catholic festival, if such observances upon the plan of New Testament worship there must be? Or has there been none occurring of such importance to all the Protestant Churches, as to furnish an occasion for a Protestant Jubilee, in which they might all have devoutly concurred? Or has but one event fallen out in the history of Britain, that is worthy of a British one. Had they acted upon this principle, instead of one, we should by this time have been blessed, (if we may not say encumbered) with perhaps one for every month, or week, in the circle of the year. We should have had days set apart for commemorating such events in our own Island, as the abolition of papal authority;—the expulsion of French, or the repulsion of Spanish invaders;—the termination of Marian government and tyranny, as well as Jacobean;—of the defeat of *Armadas*, or Gun-powder treasons;—days commemorating the restoration of the Gospel;—the settlement of reformed worship, government, and discipline;—the preservation and revival of these by signal interpositions of Providence;—the overthrow of Laudean and Prelatical tyranny, towards the middle of last century;—the preservation of the Protestant succession in the death of Queen Anne;—in the accession of King George;—and in the overthrow of repeated plots and rebellions;—anniversaries for the victories of Sheriffmuir and Culloden, *cum multis aliis*; or if our predecessors have failed in duty and faithfulness in this respect; it becomes us to think of making up for their deficiency. And if fasts and festivals should go hand in hand,—along with these times of a chearful complexion, reason and piety will equally require the introduction of a long train of black and *lugubrious* days, as one styles them, for keeping up the remembrance of calamitous events;—unless we say, that there is a time to rejoice, but not to mourn.

It would be wise, to consider where we must land before we launch out. If the principle of this act be a good one, we must criminate the Church of Scotland, for refusing so long to adopt it; and now having admitted it, she will be no less culpable, if she reduce it to practice only in one single

single instance; and that perhaps but once in a hundred years. If one day of this sort be productive of piety, or expressive of it, conducive to the honour of God, and the edification of Christians, then certainly more days must be more so, according to the maxim, *Bonum additum bono facit magis bonum.*

If it still be alleged, that the propriety of appointing such days of commemoration can only be pled for, when they are on account of singular revolutions, or providences altogether extraordinary, such as may never occur in the course of many ages: Then they can no longer be supposed needful for the ordinary purposes of piety, seeing the greater part of the successive works of God, even those which may also deserve to be styled great and memorable, may be religiously improved, and thankfully commemorated, without any such memorial expressly instituted for the purpose. It must be placed among the extraordinaries of devotion;—not prescribed by precept, but only by counsel, like Popish acts of Supererogation; and only for a rare time, and for choice souls, who may be disposed to soar above the vulgar sphere. It remains only that its advocates should clearly evince the warrantableness of such a distinction, as to the modes of celebrating and commemorating the *magnalia Dei*, or great works of God; and then satisfactorily to prove, that the Political Revolution that happened in the government of Britain in 1688, is the greatest and most memorable of all the doings of the Lord, in which this Church or nation have any interest. Persons may entertain a very high idea, and grateful sense of the mercy of the Revolution, though they may not be prepared to aver, that it is the greatest, the most beneficial, or most permanent hitherto known, under the whole heavens. It is presumed, that all Presbyterians will not yet be disposed, either speculatively or practically, to admit, as unquestionable, the truth of such a position.

To allege, that all must be undervaluing, or forgetting the Revolution, who may not chuse to pay this religious homage to its memory, is to reason in much the same manner, as the Rhemists did, when they said, “The Protestants surely have no love to the Virgin Mary, because they refuse to keep the feast of her assumption into heaven:” Or as one would do, who should charge the Church of Scotland with denying Christ his proper glory, because they decline the observation of a variety of
feasts

feasts which have been professedly instituted in honour of him; or that would suspect her orthodoxy in the doctrine of the Trinity, merely because she would not solemnly celebrate the festival of *Trinity-Sunday*. Foolish people! who do not know that every act of Christian worship is in honour of Christ, and that every Sabbath is consecrated to the adoration of the mysterious Trinity! The Christians in the primitive times were charged by the Heathens, as enemies to the Emperors and the commonwealth, because they refused to celebrate the feasts instituted in honour of the Cæsars. "Must then the Christians," said Tertullian, "be enemies to the public, because the honours they pay the Emperors are neither vain, rash nor flattering? Do you think it to be a great mark of affection, to light fires, and to dance in the streets, to set up tables, to banquet in public places, to change the face of the whole city into that of a large tavern, or to dilute the air with dirt, and run about in troops, committing insolencies, and seeking every where to gorge unruly appetites?"

C H A P. IV.

Difference between occasional Thanksgivings and Anniversary Festivals.—The Commemoration proposed not of the Nature of the former, but coincides with the latter.

THOSE who condemn the observation of festivals or holidays without exception, yet make no scruple to admit the warrantableness of appointing and observing religiously days for fasting or humiliation upon all proper occasions. Though no human authority can constitute a day holy, yet times may be set apart for religious use, and holy exercises, besides that day which God hath consecrated, and invariably fixed for that use, in the course of every week. When these are prudently ordained, and proceed on no wrong principle,—infringe not on scriptural rules relating to the worship and liberty of Christians,—are founded on no abusive pernicious customs, nor so ordered as to foster them, there can be no proper objection against the religious observation of them. If the Commemoration-act amounts to nothing more than the ordinary exercise of this power, which is competent to church-rulers, and doth not in any
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of these respects deviate from the approved principle and rules of the Church of Scotland upon this head, then it must be granted, that some part of our reasoning will be found inapplicable, and other objections against it will be of less force: But if, on the contrary, it vary from these, and approach nearer to the system of Anniversarians, we hope, with Presbyterians at least, the argument must be admitted as conclusive; nor will it appear to be a groundless assertion, when this appointment is pronounced to be a novelty and innovation. Let us examine a little the difference.

The principles of the Church of Scotland, on this head, are briefly expressed in her *Directory for public Worship*, and in the *Appendix* to it, touching days and places. “ There
 “ is no day commanded in Scripture, to be kept holy under the Gospel, but the Lord’s day, which is the Christian Sabbath. Festival days, vulgarly called holy days, having no warrant in the word of God, are not to be continued. Nevertheless, it is lawful and necessary, upon special emergent occasions, to separate a day or days for public fasting or thanksgiving, as the several eminent and extraordinary dispensations of God’s providence shall administer cause and opportunity to his people.—When some great and notable judgments are either inflicted upon a people, or apparently imminent, or by some extraordinary provocations notoriously deserved; as also when some special blessing is to be sought and obtained, public solemn fasting, is a duty that God expecteth from that nation or people.” So also in the directions concerning thanksgiving, it is always supposed, that there is some particular and present occasion calling the assembling together to give thanks, to which the exercises throughout that day are to have respect: “ Let him not only pray as at other times, but enlarge himself in due and solemn thanksgiving for former mercies and deliverances, but more especially for that which at the present calls them together to give thanks.” Consonant hereunto has been the judgment and the practice of her courts, and of her most eminent writers, since the Reformation was first settled, except when holidays were obtruded, and avowedly kept by a cringing and sycophantish party in her *. Such also are
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* In the order and doctrine of the general fast appointed by the General Assembly 1565, compiled by J. Knox and J. Craig, by order of the Assembly, after explaining the nature, warrants, causes and occasions of such fasts, they

the sentiments of the most eminent divines in neighbouring churches.

It is evident, that the Assemblies in both kingdoms, in adopting the above Directory, considered festival days of every sort, and occasional fasts and thanksgivings, as built upon

they are careful to guard against the abuse which had so long and generally prevailed with respect to the distinction of times, and against any keeping of days, so as to make them stated and recurrent. "Now to the order, it is to be observed, that the two days before expressed are not appointed for onie religion of time, nether yet that those precise days shall be observed every year following. The whole Assemblie thought those days for the present necessity most meet, leaving in the liberty of the Church, what time they will appoint to that exercise in all times to come."—"As God changeth his wands, so may our prayers, with the examples of the Saints so afflicted, be changed and ordered. Neither can the wicked justly accuse us in so doing of inconstancy: but, rather ought the chosen to glorify God, that our public fasting and humiliation is not bound to man's commandment precisely, nor to old customs, as the Papists use their ceremonies, but as God visiteth us, so in that manner seek we him, as he teacheth us, and giveth us examples in his most holy word, according to his fatherly correction."

"Excepto die Dominico nullum alium agnoscimus sacrum aut sanctum. De stativis et ordinariis loquor. Nam de repentinis feriis, ut extraordinario jejunii aut gratiarum actionis die determinari non poterat ante oblatam occasionem, et, ut loquuntur, rem natam. Non alios a prima reformatione observavit dies ecclesia Scoticana, quam diem Dominicum, et repentinas istas ferias." *Altare Damascen.*

"The question is not whether a day may be set apart occasionally for religious worship; that is, when any special providence giveth occasion for fasting and humiliation, or for thanksgiving and rejoicing: seeing, in that case, there is a special providential call to that solemn work; but whether a day may be set apart to be observed constantly, and as it recurrerth every year. The one maketh a difference between that day of the year and other days, and exempteth it altogether, and constantly from civil use, the other doth not so: the one maketh a difference among days, the other maketh the difference only in the works, or dispensations of God, which occasioneth such work on that day, and not one another, &c." *Principal Rule, Good old way defended*, p. 205, 206.

"Certe si novum et insigne aliquod beneficium in nos benignissimum numen aliquando conferre dignetur, solenniores gratiarum actiones id exposcere libenter agnoscimus; sed quæ omnibus cujusque ævi Christianis communia sunt, ea sane, præter diem a Deo ipso institutum, nullum statum et solenne festum postulant." *Peircii, Vindiciæ Fratr. Dissent.* p. 380.

"Solenniores enim hæ occasiones non ex iis, quæ ad Christianos omnes semper et in commune spectant quibus divina diei Dominicæ institutione satis cautum est; sed ex sedula divinæ erga ecclesiam vel rempublicam providentiæ observatione sunt dijudicandæ." *Ib.* 379.

In the first and purer times, this was also the usual manner in which fasts and thanksgivings were observed. When a violent persecution raged, or when the empire was threatened with any apparent danger, then the Christians kept fasts, and prayed for the prosperity of the empire. These were appointed by the ministers of the Churches, as they thought them requisite. Tertullian says, "The Bishops ordain fasts for their Churches, according as the circumstances require."

upon very different grounds; and in order to be consistent, they must be supposed to have retained the one upon such a principle, and for such reasons, as had no manner of tendency to establish the other. Though in some respects they may appear to agree, yet the latter essentially differ from the former in the following respects: 1. They are considered as having their warrant and appointment in the word of God, in certain circumstances described; and so they are not of human institution, as the others wholly are, though it be left to the discretionary power and wisdom of the rulers of the Church to specify a particular time, and order all such circumstances about them as belong to the common external order of all parts of divine worship. 2. They ought to be only occasional, and the times always of free determination; and not perpetually fixed, or ordinarily recurrent. 3. Agreeable to this, they ought to be appointed only *pro re nata*, on account of present or late occurrences, and special emergent occasions: And not be appropriated to events long since past; or such as belong equally to the ordinary state, and the ordinary exercise of the Christian Church. 4. When a retrospect is taken of times and events past, it ought not to be restricted to any one of these in particular, to the hindering of general and enlarged views, which may be connected with the special objects or causes which more immediately, at the time, call for these exercises, or which may natively contribute to a more religious and proper improvement of the present emergencies. 5. Neither are they to be appointed or considered as standing memorials of any divine mystery or benefit, or as having any symbolical use, or significancy, either in respect of the particular time of observance, or the particular manner and method of celebration. In all these particulars, it is needful to guard such days of ecclesiastical observation, in order to avoid the charge of homologating the condemned superstition of Jews and Papists. When any of them are otherwise kept, they must be true festival or holidays, in the usual acceptance of the word.

Those who plead for the sanctification of such days, do not indeed all speak exactly the same language about them, nor are agreed about the precise meaning of their terms; but in the main they agree. Though they are not so bold as to plead apostolical institution for any of them, and though they may not all go the length of maintaining, with old doating Hooker, that some days are naturally exalted
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above others, and have a character of holiness and celebrity impressed on them by the works performed thereon*; yet they hold them to be holy by ecclesiastical institution, and
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* "The works of God have always that time which is seasonablest and fittest for them. His works are some ordinary, some more rare, all worthy of observation, but not all of like necessity to be often remembered; they all have their times, but they all do not add the same estimation and glory to the times wherein they are. For, as God by being every where, yet doth not give unto all places, one and the same degree of holiness, so neither one and the same dignity to all times by working in all. No doubt, as God's extraordinary presence hath hallowed and sanctified certain places, so they are his extraordinary works, that have truly and worthily advanced certain times, for which cause, they ought to be, with all men that honour God, more holy than other days. If any should ask how it cometh to pass, that one doth excel another, seeing the light of all the days in the year proceedeth from one sun. To this the wise man answereth, (Eccles. xxxiii. 7.) that *that knowledge of the Lord hath parted them asunder, he hath by them disposed the times and solemn feasts, some he hath chosen out and sanctified, &c.* Eccles. Pol. B. v. Sect. 69.

Q. What do you mean by Festivals?

A. "Days set apart by the Church, either for the remembrance of some special mercies of God, such as the Birth and Resurrection of Christ, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, &c. or in memory of the great heroes of the Christian religion, the blessed Apostles, and other Saints, who were the happy instruments of conveying to us the knowledge of Christ Jesus, by preaching the Gospel through the world, and most of them attesting the truth of it with their blood. They are of ecclesiastical institution, agreeable to Scripture, and the general design of them for the promoting of piety, consonant to the practice of the Primitive Church, &c." *Excellency of the Church of England*, p. 105. &c.

By 1. Eliz. c. 2. "All persons are obliged to resort to their parish-church on holidays, as well as Sundays, upon pain of punishment, by the censures of the Church, and twelve-pence for every offence to be levied by distress"—By 2. 3. Ed. VI. c. 19. "None is allowed to eat flesh upon any Friday, or Saturday, or Ember-days, or in Lent, or any other Fish-days, upon pain of forfeiting ten shillings, and ten days imprisonment for the first offence; and for the second, twenty shillings, and twenty days imprisonment; and so *toties quoties*, except persons licensed by the King, &c."

Dr Grey's *Ecclesiastical Law*, p. 102. 103.

"Festa Christianorum non solum ratione ordinis et politiæ, sed etiam ratione mysterii celebrantur, suntque deis fasti vere aliis sanctiores, sacrationes, et pars quædam divini cultus.—Non est sublata sed mutata significatio et discretio dierum. In Ecclesia non esse eandem rationem ciborum, et festorum, nam ciborum delectus non est ab Ecclesia inductus propter significationem, non quidem talem qualis erat Judæorum, sed aliam et diversam."

Bellarmin. de cultu sanct. l. 3. cap. 10.

"Festum notare potest proprie diem solennem anniversarium a Deo institutum qui cum singulari lætitia et cultu observetur ad gratias agendum Deo pro certo aliquo beneficio in populum suum collato: ita ut elementa festum constituentia sint. 1. Dies anniversarius, et publicus, Ecclesiæ. 2. Feriatio. 3. Lætitia singularis, et peculiaris cultus ac gratiarum actio pro certo beneficio. 4. Significatio et representatio mysteriorum quæ illo die peractæ sunt. 5. Et hinc promanans sanctitas illius diei præ aliis quippe qui pars sit divini cultus et celebrari debeat ratione mysterii, et non tantum ratione ordinis ac politiæ Ecclesiasticæ." Voet. *Select. Disp. to. 3. p. 1294. de Sab. et festis. Piscat. in Gal. 4.*

as such are to be observed in preference to other days, as often as they recur: That they are not only to be celebrated as days set apart for religious exercises in general, but as specially appointed for commemorating particular mysteries, works or persons;—that these days, at least the principal and more sacred among them, are no longer free to be employed, as other days, in the ordinary business of life;—and that their observation becomes necessary, not only in respect of order and policy, but (as many hold) in regard also of their mystery.

The consecration and observation of days, in this manner, and with such views, as it must have a tendency to weaken the obligation, and detract from the peculiar solemnity of those days which God hath expressly instituted; and also implies a tacit charge of insufficiency in the ordinary means and methods which divine wisdom hath settled in the Church, for commemorating his manifold benefits; so, instead of being friendly to the due observation of the present course of Providence, or the solemn exercises of fasting or thanksgiving upon special emergent occasions, it must tend rather to supersede them, or render the observation of them less frequent, or altogether burdensome, if not impracticable. The days previously marked in the old Rubrics, the numerous lists of festivals which in process of time must swell the calendar, whether moveable or immoveable, will afford such abundance of work, that there will be little disposition or leisure left, for the additional burden of occasional days, however frequent or urgent the calls may be for them. When the current of these solemn acts of devotion is made to run backwards, it cannot flow onwards so freely and copiously, but will rather leave the channel dry. We need wonder the less, that the same Churches that establish the one, and are zealous for retaining them, should at the same time almost totally neglect the other, and on the matter prohibit the use of them; as in a neighbouring Church it is censurable by canon, for any to fast publicly or privately, without public licence*.

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* *Q. May ministers appoint public or private fasts without authority?*

A. "No minister or ministers shall, without licence or direction of the Bishop of the diocese, first obtained and had under his hand and seal, appoint or keep any solemn fasts either publicly or in private houses, other than such as by law are, or by public authority shall be appointed, nor shall be willingly present at any of them, under pain of suspension for the first fault, of excommunication for the second, and of deposition from the ministry for the third." *Can. 72. Grey's Ecclesiastical Law. p. 105.*

It may be obvious, I think, at first view, that the appointment in question bears a nearer affinity to the principle and plan of holidays, than to that adopted by the Church of Scotland, in reference to occasional thanksgivings. It doth not accord with the ordinary rule for determining and regulating the latter: Whereas all the arguments by which it is capable of being defended, are such as are usually employed, and with equal force, by the advocates for holidays, in their vindication: In like manner, the same answers serve equally to invalidate them in the one case and in the other: And the most of the objections which lie against the abrogated doctrine and practice of holidays, may be found applicable to this. Like them, it is designed for a commemoration;—it is appropriated to the memory of a particular event, long since past;—it abstracts from any present remarkable providences, or emergent occasions;—it seems to make a similar distinction of times;—it is in its nature, as it has been properly named, a Secular Anniversary, and as such must be designed to be recurrent.—It is liable to the same abuses, which this sort of days has usually been found to produce, besides some others which may be peculiar to itself. If this be true, we have need to consider what a sacrifice we are about to make, and what a wound we may be ready to give to Presbytery, by the celebration of this one day: How we disable ourselves ever after from combating successfully, one of the most flagrant and dangerous superstitions which reigned in ages of darkness, and still prevails in a considerable degree, by casting away our own weapons, and furnishing our adversaries with others against ourselves.

To evince more clearly these views to be just, it will not be deemed unseasonable to enter a little deeper into the argument, as well as the history of festivals, in order to point out more precisely the nature and tendency of this act. I feel too strongly on the subject to pass it slightly. My countrymen have not had any urgent necessity to review their principles, and those of the Reformed Churches, upon this head, for a long time past: Some of them, it is possible, by this time, may have lost a distinct knowledge of them. The discussion may have its use.

C H A P.

C H A P. V.

Commemoration of Divine Mysteries or Mercies.—To attempt it by distinct stated Holidays unwarranted in Scripture.—Unsuitable to Christianity.—Impracticable.—Injurious to Christian Liberty.—To the temporal Interests of Society.—Growing Nature of Superstition.—Excessive Increase of Festivals in the Times of Popery—A Native Effect of admitting the Principle.

A Recollection of past mercies, and a grateful commemoration of the Divine goodness in them, is, without doubt, an essential part of true religion: And in order to perform it, whether in a personal or public manner, there must be certain times requisite, as well as external ways of expressing it. This, in a peculiar manner, belongs to the Christian religion, and must enter deeply into every part of its worship. It has a necessary retrospect to certain facts and events long since past: And the whole duty of a Christian is, on the matter, comprised in gratitude and praise. The religion of the patriarchal ages had a greater respect to future events, and unaccomplished promises and predictions. The same may also be said of the Jewish. Though a long series of stupendous providences, and of glorious miracles, were produced in favour of the Hebrew people; and though they wanted not a number of standing memorials of these, yet the substance of their hope, and the chief cause of their joy was something future; and while their commemorative times and ordinances served to preserve the memory of events past, they were at the same time intended to be subservient to the still higher end of prefiguring what was to come. Christianity looks back to that for which Judaism looked forward; and what this exhibited in figures, that contains in truth. And as none will entertain a doubt of the necessity of a grateful remembrance of the redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ, and the several transactions relating to it, so as little will they question the propriety of keeping in pious memory, the successive wonders of Providence, and the deliverances wrought for the Church of Christ, in the several ages of it, especially those in which a people are more immediately interested. It is only as to the
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the manner or means of doing so, that there can be a controversy; and in this, as in all things relating to religion, we are ready to mistake, unless the human mind be attentive to Divine prescription.

The history of mankind, in religious matters, in all ages, is little else than the history of error, and endless absurdities. These have never been wanting, when men have wantonly indulged themselves in the liberty of devising and practising acts and methods of serving the Deity which he never required. They have often, indeed, erred in the object, but more often, and first, in the means and manner of worship: At one time erring in defect, and at another in excess: Now verging towards impiety, and again sinking into slavish or freakish superstition; while true religion lies at an equal distance from both extremes. Among other things, attempts to aid the memory, and to assist the senses in religion, to beget or keep alive pious gratitude, by the institution of days, rites and mystical signs of human device, have contributed not a little to promote superstition, and even to introduce that idolatry which often hath deluged the world.

The worship of the Gospel is not more arbitrary and unfixed than that settled under the law. To the positive and symbolical institutions appointed therein, which are but few, no addition can be made, lawfully, or to any advantage. The days, or rather day, which Divine wisdom hath hallowed, and the ordinances which it hath enjoined, are abundantly sufficient for all the purposes of religion. If any of these are designed to be memorials of redemption, or symbols of its mysteries, their design is marked out, and the relation between the signs and the mysteries fixed in the rule of institution. Whatever immediate or symbolical relation any particular ordinance or act may have to any part of the mystery of redemption or faith, it bears, at the same time, a relation to the whole mystery, and, instead of excluding any of the parts, comprehends them all. Neither particular days, nor particular ordinances, are to be considered as peculiarly appropriated to any one event or mystery separately taken; because, like Christ himself, the doctrines and the mysteries of our faith are undivided. No commemorative or festival days, in this sense, belong to the Gospel-state: For it is that continued day which the *Lord hath made*, wherein we are called to rejoice. It is that great and high festival in which we are to sing *Hosannas*

nabs and *hallelujabs*; and in which, without ceasing, we are to draw water out of the spiritual wells of salvation. It is the passover, ever to be kept with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. It is the season of festivity that ever lasteth, and a perpetual *Jubilee*. The Sabbath is not now to be observed as ceremonial or mystical, nor as a weekly festival appropriated only to the celebration of the resurrection of Christ, but for commemorating the whole of our redemption at large, and for performing all the exercises of godliness in general. The same commemoration is proper for every day, and in every duty *.

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* Cum Deus ipse primum cujusque hebdomadis diem sanctum esse jussit, quo in ipsius ut Creatoris, sed præcipue ut Redemptoris, laudes celebrandas toti incumbere debeamus; Christi incarnationem, mortem, resurrectionem, ascensionem, cæteraquæ, quæ nostræ redemptionis causa præstitit, grata memoria recolere præcipuum est diei Dominicæ opus. Qua igitur auctoritate alios dies, singulis annis recurrentes, in hunc finem consecrare homines importuni sustineant? Notatu dignissima sunt, de hac re, *Clementis Alexandrini* verba: Jubemur autem colere et honorare eundem quem et Verbum esse et Servatorem et Ducem habemus persuasum, et per ipsum Patrem, non selectis diebus, ut aliqui alii, sed continenter per totam vitam hoc agentes, et modis omnibus. [*Strom.* l. vii.] *Peircii Vinlicia*; p. 379; &c. cap. 11.

Negamus in memoriam resurrectionis Christi institutum diem Dominicum, quia si, in memoriam resurrectionis Christi, institutus fuisset, sequeretur, diē Dominico concionandum de resurrectione, et collectas proprias de resurrectione, lectiones, evangelia, epistolas, cantica; et psalmos recitanda et decantanda singulis diebus Dominicis, sicut, die nativitatis, de nativitate, et passionis, de passione &c.

Nihil est igitur quod vulgo decantatur, refricandam esse memoriam beneficiorum redemptionis, ne tradantur oblivioni. Quam solliciti sunt de memoria beneficiorum Christi, qui Ecclesiam tamen Christi ipsam opprimunt, fidos pastores percutiunt, et greges dissipant. Recolenda est memoria non modo eorum mysteriorum, quorum illi memoriam celebrant diebus festis, verum etiam omnium, sed non per festa memorialia. Quoties prædicatur evangelium, ministrantur sacramenta, legimus sacram scripturam, oramus, meditamur, recolimus mysteria religionis, et beneficia nobis per Christum parta: Nulla alia signa, aut instrumenta memorialia, mysteriorum religionis dedit nobis Dominus, quam verbum et sacramenta.

Valeant igitur festa memorialia, et omnes dies mystici, sive sint mystici respectu memoriæ, sive significationis rei præsentis aut futuræ, et retineamus diem Dominicum, ad usum non mysticum, id est, vel ut festum memoriale resurrectionis, vel præfigurativum vitæ beatæ, sed ad usum moralem, id est, ad colendum Deum quovis cultu ab ipso imperato, prout feret occasio, aut ordo et politia cujusque ecclesiæ. Recte *Willetus* in *Synopsi*: Non jam amplius habemus, inquit, Sabbathum ut mysticum, sed ut morale.

Certum est beneficiorum Dei in nos, et mysticorum Christi at salutem nobis acquirendam patratorum, memoriam in animis nostris perpetuam esse debere, et a nobis continenter recoli oportere; atque ad hoc a Christo et apostolis institutum est verbi ministerium, et evangelii prædicatio,

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Those who attempt to divide the benefits of redemption, or the acts and events by which it was obtained, parcelling them out one by one, and presenting them in a detached artificial order, confining the attention and exercises of Christians, on certain days, now to this, and then to another, one day commemorating the incarnation, on another the circumcision, the baptism, the crucifixion or the ascension of Christ, betray conceptions on these subjects too gross and carnal; they seem only to regard the letter, and to forget the spirit which quickeneth. It is like mangling and dismembering a human body, which destroys the life and use, as well as the unity and beauty of it. This method of artificial arrangement, and anniversary representation or commemoration, is wholly a human contrivance, not merely useless, but hurtful. It gives narrow, incomplete and disjointed views of the objects of faith and of Christian meditation; it restrains the liberty of Christian exercises; limits the free Spirit that bloweth where it listeth; tends to produce a formal, forced and artificial devotion; and gradually establishes the notion of a kind of sacred relation between certain days, and the particular mysteries or subjects commemorated upon them, though neither founded in nature nor positive institution. And in this artificial mode of exhibition, the image is always left mangled and incomplete, even when the whole detached parts are assembled, and the several days, with their peculiar mysteries, are put together. Even those who have the greatest variety of them, will never be capable of making up hereby a complete system of the articles of faith, or the benefits belonging to the Christian religion. Some Churches content themselves with two or three. Some have double or triple the number; while others employ themselves, in this kind of will-worship,

“ Quæ quid aliud est quam continua mysteriorum illorum, et Dei in nos
 “ beneficiorum commemoratio, et ad veram ex ea pietatem et sanctitatem
 “ concipiendam, alendam, fovendam, corroborandam adhortatio? Verum
 “ ut ad, singulorum illorum mysteriorum et beneficiorum, et solemnem ac
 “ publicam commemorationem certi quidem dies festi Deo sacri, annuatim
 “ recurrentes, a fidelibus Christianis quotannis celebrandi et observandi
 “ constituerentur, id vero est quod nec Christus nec apostoli Ecclesiæ Chri-
 “ stianæ necessarium esse duxerunt. Si enim duxisset necessarium, id pro-
 “ culdubio non omisissent, non enim ad hoc sapientia et prudentia spirituali
 “ destituebantur, ut perspicerent quid hic utile et operæ prætium factu
 “ esset. At ea de re, in toto Novo Testamento, Evangelistarum et Aposto-
 “ lorum scriptis, ne minimum quidem vestigium, verbulum, aut literula
 “ existat.” Capel. in *Syntag. Theol. in Acad. Salmur. Part. ii. p. 600.*
De Diebus Festis.

ship, almost from the beginning of the year to the end of it; but still to little purpose, while so much is left undone; and by far the greater number of articles remain uncommemorated and uncelebrated *. For the law of Antichristian commemorations, is like the rigid law of works, impossible to be fulfilled, or like the ancient law of ceremonies, a yoke too grievous for any to bear.

It is true indeed, our minds cannot take in all or many of these objects at once; nor can they be equally intent, so narrow is their capacity, upon every one of the divine mysteries or works, at the same time; a distinct and successive consideration of them therefore is requisite. But the order and the times for this must still be left free, both for private Christians and the ministers of religion. To prescribe these by authority for all persons, and by a fixed and perpetual law, is unwarranted, absurd and tyrannical. All ought to enjoy the liberty reserved to them by Christ, of ranging through the divine pastures as they may find most needful, or suitable for their edification. They may attach
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* “ Si tantum institutio rudiorum in Catechesi spectaretur, cur non celebrant diem festum pro singulis articulis symboli, ut remissione peccatorum, spe resurrectionis et vitæ æternæ; pro singulis præceptis Decalogi, pro singulis orationis Dominicæ petitionibus, pro fide et resipiscentia ab operibus mortuis. &c.” *Calderw. 698.*

“ Quid enim, reverâ necesse fuit singulos dies singulis Dei beneficiis, vel Christianæ religionis mysteriis, aut Christi erga nos amoris documentis annuatim celebrandis assignare, sacrosque facere? Sic enim res facile in infinitum prope abiret, ut nullus in anno dies sit qui non possit sic sacer fieri et festus evadere, quod longe esset absurdissimum, sic enim toto anno cessandum foret perpetuo, nunquam operandum. Satis ergo est ad pietatem et religionem in hominum animis excitandam, alendam, et fovendam, si quoties sacri coetus habentur, in iis per divini verbi et evangelii prædicationem, quotidiana prope tum solemnium et illustriorum Dei beneficiorum, tum religionis Christianæ mysteriorum, et memorabilium vitæ Christi eventuum, fiat et recolatur memoria, sine speciali et peculiari, ad hoc diei alicujus destinatione atque consecratione.” *Theol. Salm. ut supra, p. 602.*

“ Si quis dicat, non ita multa fore, si tantum illa festa servarentur, quæ apotelesma Christi Mediatoris aut insigne factum commemorent; jam infero æque instituenda esse festa baptismi, cænæ, præsentationis, disputationis in templo, ac circumcisionis;—mortis, ac resurrectionis;—conceptionis ac nativitatis;—transfigurationis in monte, et insuflationis in apostolos, ac pentecostes;—tentationis in horto, fugæ in Egyptum, tentationis in deserto, æque ac sepulturæ aut mortis;—aliorum denique miraculorum ac memorabilium, ut cibationis per 5 et 7 panes, emissionis 70 discipulorum, sanationis paralytici, &c. suscitationis filiae Jairi, Lazari, &c.; nam nulla divina beneficia absque grata commemoratione demittenda. (Juxta illud ps. 103. 2.) et in omnibus Dei operibus, imprimis solenni die, gaudendum.” (*1^a sal. 92.*) *Voet. Select. Disput. p. 3. pag. 1300. De Sab. et Fest.*

their minds to any subject or article indiscriminately, or employ their devotion about this or the other of them, as they may be providentially presented, or most readily occur, or as discretion may direct, in whatever order, or connection, or variety they chuse, without any danger of neglecting the due sanctification of holy times, or mistaking the proper and suitable exercise pertaining to the day; or without incurring *premunires*, or exposing themselves to the guilt of breaking canons. They are not only enemies to the secular interests, and tyrants over the external actions of Christians, but they are aspiring to be lords over their minds and consciences, who presume to take this liberty from them.

As to the occasional solemn exercises relative to the providential works of God, by no stated times or rules previously fixed, can the proper order or season of them be determined, as none can know what a day or a year may bring forth. What other order or time can, with propriety, be prescribed for these, but that in which they are occurring, according as the decree brings forth its events? Whether the Lord by these be calling to gladness or mourning, and which of these exercises soever may be specially proposed, and be as it were predominant on any of these times, yet they are not to be considered as inconsistent with one another at any time; and though the attention of worshippers may be especially turned to some particular works, joyful or sad, which may be specified as the causes or occasions, this lays no arbitrary restrictions upon their thoughts or exercises, but is nothing more than a seasonable observation of the doings of the Lord, and a regarding the present operations of his hand. Neither can the observation of these days have any tendency to make common time holy, or to rob them of the free use of any one day in the week or year for their ordinary employments, besides the Sabbath; because the use of it is but occasional, or *pro hac vice*, without any idea of sanctity or fitness belonging to it above other days; and when the exercises of that day are over, all distinction of that day, in time coming, is also over, and it remains as much as before, a lawful working day: So that the same day that was employed in thanksgiving, may, with equal propriety, be observed when it recurs again, in fasting, or perhaps in neither of them.

Upon the rational and truly Christian plan of commemoration and of thanksgiving, the legislative authority of Christ,
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and the liberty of Christians, is preserved entire; the Sabbath will maintain its due distinction from all other days; the mandate, "Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work," will remain inviolated; the interests of civil society will be secured; the Christian Church will be in no danger of being incumbered with an endless load of arbitrary impositions and human commandments, and an ever-increasing number of Antichristian Sabbaths: While the scriptural and spiritual worship of the Gospel will not be subjected to adulterations and continual interruption from the impertinent jargon of human forms, and the obtrusion of old or new liturgic whimsies.

Upon the other plan this is altogether impossible. From the moment it is adopted, the liberty of Christians will become a precarious thing. Their time, their employment, their temporal, as well as their spiritual interests, must lie at the mercy of a weak despotic magistracy; or of a superstitious domineering clergy. What these may be pleased to sanctify, they must no longer call common. They must allow men to judge them "in respect of meats and of drinks, and of new moons and of Sabbath days," or else they must suffer for their refusal. The yoke of Christ, which he pronounces to be easy, and his burden which is light, will be turned into one so grievous as to make individuals and whole nations groan under it. Some, for political or prudential reasons, may see meet to be more moderate and reserved than others in the use of their power; but let it once be conceded to them, and their claim allowed, and that by Divine right, and there remains no more security, nor effectual means for controlling it. He that pretends a right to rob a subject of a little of his property at his pleasure, may rob him of a little more, till, by little and little, he may have nothing left he can call his own.

The encroachments of superstition are of all others the most difficult to restrain: When once they break in, they swell to a boundless sea. Of this the history of past ages affords the most ample proof. When once the ancient nations got into the humour of multiplying their deities, and of appointing sacrifices and festivals in their honour, to what an astonishing multitude did they soon grow? All the universe was replenished with gods; altars were reared in every city, mountain and grove, and in all the furrows of the field. Every month of the year became full of fasts or sacred feasts. If we look into an old Grecian or Roman calendar,

lendar, we scarce see one day, from the beginning of the year to the end of it, left blank ; but here a feast, and there a feast, and for ever a feast. It seems to have been but one continued holiday throughout the year. In Hesiod's time they could reckon up no less than 30,000 divinities, great and small, celestial, terrestrial or infernal : And after-times did not diminish the number ; but a new succession was made to the rabble, with new rites and days proper to them : On which account the poet sportingly represents Atlas as almost sinking under the accumulated weight of such a number of gods in the latter times of Rome :

—Nec turba Deorum
*Talis, ut est hodie, contentaque sidera paucis
 Numinibus miserum urgebant Atlanta minori
 Pondere.* Juv. Sat. xiii.
 Ere gods grew numerous, and the heavenly croud,
 Press'd wretched Atlas with a lighter load.

GREECH.

When Christians imbibed the spirit, and began to adopt the customs of the Heathen, they were not long in equalling, or rather exceeding their predecessors, both in respect of the multifarious objects of their worship, and the times and means of presenting it. This became more remarkably the case, after the introduction of saint-worship, which soon supplied them with an inexhaustible fund. Saints and martyrs multiplied so fast upon their hand, that there was no more room for days of distinct commemoration ; and their very names could scarce be all rehearsed. Frequenting tombs, churches and altars, making processions, singing hymns and litanies, pronouncing and hearing panegyrics, was likely to become all the business. The Christian martyrology became as voluminous as the Pagan mythology. In the time of Eusebius, we are told, that the saintly names to be commemorated, already amounted to more than 5000 for every day of the year. No wonder though those who attempted to compile the lives and acts of the saints, in later times, should have found it such a long and laborious task, as would require the space of several lives to accomplish it. The collection begun last century by Roswede, who died in 1629, and continued by the Jesuits Bolland, Henschen, Papebroch and Cardon, in the year 1680, amounted to the number of fourteen volumes in folio, and they had then dispatched only the saints of the first four months

months of the year. To shorten a little the labour, and to abridge the ceremonial of commemoration, they hit upon the device of associating a number of them into fellowship, and making one day serve for several of them; so that, on some busy days, good Catholics could pay their compliments to thousands at once, whereby they were canonically exempted from the drudgery of dancing daily attendance upon them, being quit with them till that day twelve months: Thus, on Innocents day, they commemorated the babes of Bethlehem, an indefinite number: On the 9th of March, the forty martyrs of Sebastis: Another was consecrated to St Urfula and her 11,000 virgins: On another, they discharged their homage to myriads of the heavenly host, whose number at least amounts to thousands of thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, which is the work of September 29th, the festival of St Michael and all the angels, whose names, virtues and services, taken one by one, it would have been rather difficult to record particularly. A similar universal commemoration they were obliged at length to appoint for the human saints: Lest any of them should have been forgotten and overlooked in the croud, the first of November was consecrated to perpetuity, in honour of all the saints. But notwithstanding of this commodious and expeditious way, they had learned, of paying the immense accumulating debts, which they acknowledged to be due, yet still there remained abundance of particular accounts to clear on particular marked days, to give sufficient employment both to priests and laity, if they proposed to solemnise the whole round of feasts, whether double, semi-double, or simple*; general, national, provincial or local, with that degree of strictness which they pretended was necessary. On the greater festivals, public business and secular labour were always prohibited, with the exception only of some cases of necessity: Had the whole been accompanied with cessation from work (which was found impossible) more than half the world must have starved, and society gone to dissolution. Even as matters were conducted, they proved an intolerable hardship, particularly on the poor, as well as

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* The feasts called *double*, which are celebrated with greater solemnity, in respect of their offices and rites, as ordained in the Roman kalendar, amount annually to 98. The *semi-double*, including Sabbaths, make 130; and the *simple* exceed 100; the whole amounting to more than 328. Some of these have been, in later times, abolished by some bulls of Popes, or edicts of Princes, or the observation of them left free.

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a continual temptation to the idle and dissolute; especially when they became so mad on their superstition, as not only to dedicate holidays to God, to Christ, to angels, to the Virgin *, to apostles and saints, real or supposed, but also to inanimate objects, or particular acts, events or circumstances; to crosses, spears and nails, chains, clothes, beads, dedication of churches, anniversaries of consecration of bishops, celebration of councils, &c. †. Though the severe load of these human impositions was soon felt, and the bad effects of them became apparent, and were frequently complained of, yet seldom were retrenchments made, but the rage for holiday-devotions continued to increase from age to age. New saints grew famous, new feats were done, and new festivals were still wanted, to preserve the savoury memory of them, while the old still retained their credit. Singular merit was supposed to lie in the punctual observation of them: Great rewards were provided and promised to them who kept the same, either in the name of the saints themselves, by their lying panegyrist ‡, or by the authority

* A great number belong to Mary, some of them being proper to her; and, in others, she is conjoined with the Saviour. The principal of them, are the immaculate conception, nativity, presentation, annunciation, visitation, purification, assumption, and St Mary *ad nives*. Baronius adds the feast of the dedication of the church of the martyrs on the 13th of May; and the feast of commemoration of a naval victory gained over the Turks, on the 7th of October. To which the feast of Joseph and Mary appointed by Urban VIII. may be also added. But, besides all these, she has been honoured by the institution of a weekly holiday, which, on that account, has been called the *Sabbath of Mary*; which was introduced by Urban II. who ordered a mass to be said for her every Saturday; and the anthem was composed for that service, *ora pro populo, interveni pro clero, intercede pro devoto femineo sexu*. "If we set apart," said the blaspheming Pope, "one day in the week to the special worship of God, why should we not assign" also one day to the honour of God's mother."

† Festivals were instituted in memory of the invention of the cross; of the elevation of the cross; of the blood that flowed from the wooden crucifix; of the spear of Longinus; of the grave clothes and napkin; of the conversion of Paul; of the chair of St Peter; the chains of Peter; of the sacrament; of the rosary, &c. The Greek church appointed an anniversary in honour of the II. Council of Nice, which they were pleased to dignify with the title of *the feast of Orthodoxy*. They commemorated another in the same manner.

‡ St Barbara, who suffered under Maximilian, is represented by Sim. Metaphrastes and the *Golden Legend*, to have requested the following favour in behalf of her commemorators, at the time of her execution, and to have obtained it; "O king, now hear my prayer, that whosoever shall remember thy name, and this my conflict, no pestilent disease may enter in to his house." In like manner, St Blasius obtained a cure for a woman's son, who had a fish-bone sticking in his throat; and, at the same time prayed,

rity of the Sovereign Pontiffs*. Judgments also were solemnly threatened, and, in many a doleful tale, were said
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prayed, that " whenever, hereafter, the like should befall men, children or " beasts, if any of them shall remember my name, saying, O Lord, hasten " thy help through the intercession of thy servant Blasius, do thou cure him " speedily."—He also restored to a poor widow her only hog, which a wolf had taken away from her; and when afterwards, in token of thankfulness, she brought the hog's head and feet boiled to the martyr in prison, he blessed her, and said, " Woman, in this habit celebrate my memorial, and no " good thing shall ever be wanting in thy house from my God; yea, and if " any other imitating thee, shall in like manner celebrate my memorial, he " shall receive an everlasting gift from my God, and a blessing all the days of " his life."—And when about to suffer, he prayed thus, " Whoever shall " have recourse to this thine altar, (meaning himself,) and whosoever shall " have swallowed a bone or a prickle, or be vexed with any disease, or be " in any affliction, necessity or persecution, grant Lord, to every one, his " heart's desire, &c."—Upon which, says the Legend, Christ descended from heaven in a cloud, and overshadowed him, saying, " O my beloved cham- " pion, I will not only do this, but that also which thou didst request for " the widow; and will bless also every house which shall celebrate thy me- " mory, and I will fill their storehouses with all good things, for this thy " glorious confession, and thy faith which thou hast in me." St Marina obtained, it seems, for her worshippers, no less a boon; " Now, O Lord, " whosoever, for thy sake, shall worship this tabernacle of my body, which " hath fought for thee; and whosoever shall build an oratory in the name " of thy handmaid, and all those who shall faithfully describe this my con- " flict of martyrdom, and shall read and remember the name of thy hand- " maid, give unto them remission of sins, and let not the avenging hand " come near them, nor the evil of famine, nor the curse of pestilence," &c.

How often do we read of the Virgin Mary appearing to her votaries, as- suring them of her protection and best blessings; or extricating them from their evils; to one she hath brought meat, to another medicine. Sometimes she hath fed them with her milk, or treated them deliciously in the compa- ny of angels. To some she hath been so obliging, as to wed them with a ring, &c. &c.

* The encouragement given to keep holidays, by the promises of pardons and indulgences, has been as abundant and liberal, as any could reasonably desire: these have been published at the door of every church, and the cor- ners of every street. Pope Adrian granted to any who should go on a Christ- mas-day in the morning, and say his prayers in the church of St *Anastasia* at Rome, a plenary indulgence. A reward of a 1000 years pardon is annexed to the looking on the image of our Lord at St Peter's at some particular fes- tivals; for visiting the church of St Paul's 47,000 years pardon; and the church of St Mary on every festival 12,000 years. Two different Popes give assurance, that " whoever having one of the consecrated beads, shall de- " voutly fast, according to the custom of the Church, on the eve of all the " feasts of our blessed Lady, shall gain a 100 years of indulgence; but if he " fasts them in bread and drink only, a 1000 years pardon." For visiting the church of St *Hilary* at Chartres, in lent, a 1,800 years pardon; on other days 10,000 and 20,000; on Easter-day 28,000, the same on Ascension and Whit Sunday. Millions of years are promised for visiting four churches in Paris. At the dedication of the Lateran Church, the Pope " gave as many " days pardon as there might fall drops of rain, should it rain continually " for eight days together; and when he had granted this, he thought with-
" in

to have been inflicted, by invifible powers, on fuch as pre-
fumed to profane them*. Strange vifions, voices and re-
velations

“ in himfelf, whether he had fo much power or not; then there came a
“ voice from heaven, and faid, Sylvefter, thou haft power enough to give
“ that pardon.”—“ And bleffed is the mother that beareth the child that
“ heareth mafs on Saturdays at St John Latrerans.—In the grave of St John
“ cometh every Good-Friday in the night the holy cream and oil, and he
“ that putteth therein his head, hath an 100,000 years of pardon.”

* The Pagans prohibited even domeftic employments to their women on
certain feftivals;

Non audeat ulla
Lanifitam penfis impofuiffe manum. Tibul.

According to Ovid, it went hard with Alcithoe and her fifters, for having
fpun on the feaft of Bacchus; he was fo enraged at it, that he transformed
them into bats. Poor *Pentheus*, was, for the like crime, torn in pieces. The
hiftoires of the Romifh Church contain many fuch instances of revenge. It
is related in the annals of Flanders, that a man who had got a fhirt made
on the day of the *Assumption of our Lady*, found it, as he was going to put it
on, fprinkled all over with blood, for which reafon, it was deposite among
the holy relicts. Bonaventure, in the life of St Francis, narrates, “ that a
“ wood-feller having gone out one day to cut wood; as he raifed up his axe to
“ give the ftroke, he heard a voice crying three times, *It is my feaft, it is not*
“ *permitted to work*; but continuing his work notwithstanding, both his
“ hands ftuck faft to the handle of the axe; nor could the poor man re-
“ move them till he had begged the Saint’s pardon, and promifed to be
“ more refpectful towards him for the future.”—Father Melchior, in his
hiftoire of the holy Virgin, (1. 5. c. 2.) tells the ftory of a lady in the city of
Quamofa, who having ordered her horfes to be put to the coach, to go to
“ her farm with a view to fet her fervants to work on the day of the *Annun-*
“ *ciation*; when fhe was got half way, her horfes ftopt, as if they were be-
“ come immoveable: the lady alighted, and went into a fecret place, *pour*
“ *faire fes neceffités*, when a fudden whirlwind arifing, threw her to the
“ ground, till her face was all over bedaubed; *lui plongea le vifage dans fon ordu-*
“ *re dont elle fut toute falie.*” But Peter, an ox-driver, mentioned in the life
of St Hippolytus, did not efcape quite fo well; but merely for greafing his wag-
gon on the day of St Mary Magdalene, faw his waggon and oxen confumed
by fire from heaven, and his own thigh fcorched in a miferable manner.
Conform. des Cerem. modern, cap. 6.

All thefe might well pafs in the ages of credulity; but who would expect
to hear a noble hiftorian of the civil wars, much celebrated in Britain; and
alfo one of the firft-rate divines of the Church of England, recording a re-
markable judgment inflicted on a bold contemner of the fanctity both of the
fanctuary and the feftival of St Chadd. A commander in the Parliament’s
army, it feems, having entered the town of Litchfield to attack a cathedral,
was fhot in the forehead as he was looking out at a window, “ And this,”
fays Dr South, (*horribile dictu!*) “ was on *St Chadd’s day*, the name of
“ which Saint that church bare, being dedicated to God in memory of the
“ fame.” Thus, like another Cain, a mark of vengeance was fet upon him,
whereby he might be known to all pofterity, while the memory of St Chadd
fhould laft. A punifhment furely too flight for fuch a crime. No wonder
though the jealous guardian Saint, fhould let fly a fhott to avenge his honour
from the double affront of profaning his church and his holiday at the fame
time!

Tantane animis cœleftibus ira?
In heavenly breasts can fuch resentment dwell?

velations from heaven were published to remind mankind of their duty in this matter, and to spur them on to greater degrees of perfection *. Nay, they were assured that some noted

* Anselm mentions a divine apparition to an Abbot in a storm, whereby he was admonished to keep the feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin, upon which, Baronius says, that feast was first kept in England. Which revelation, Wadding tells us, was publicly recited in the office for the day, and was not only extant in several Breviaries of England, France, Spain, and Italy, but he had diverse himself authorised by the Pope, wherein it was recommended as true and piously to be believed, and accordingly hath been publicly sung and used in the Church about an hundred years: "And what," saith he, "is the consequence of disbelieving this, but to say, in effect, that the Pope and the Roman Church are easily cheated and abused by impostors and forgers of false revelations, to institute new festival solemnities on the credit of them."

Paul the hermit was canonized for a saint, upon the authority of a vision which Anthony had of his soul flying to heaven, a revelation which was made to him of his being there.

One of the most memorable and most idolatrous festivals ever appointed, is that of *Corpus Christi*: This was instituted by Urban IV. upon the credit of a revelation made to a certain woman, Juliana. In the bull published for the celebration of it the Pope gives this reason for it, "That while he was in a lower capacity, he understood that a revelation had been made to certain Catholics, that this feast should be observed in the Church." The revelation is somewhat singular, therefore we shall give it more at length in the words of *J. Dieffenius Blarius*, Prior of Liege, where was the scene of action. "In an hospital, hard by the town, there was a famous virgin, called Juliana, who had many extasies and raptures, and so prophetic a spirit, as to discern the thoughts and intentions of her neighbours hearts: She wrestled with devils, discoursed with the Apostles, and wrought many miracles. But one thing peculiar to her was, that in her prayers, she almost always saw the moon in her brightness, but with a snip or fragment taken off from her roundness: at which she was much troubled, but by no means could get it out of her fancy. At last God was pleased to reveal it to her, That the moon signified the present Church, and that fraction the want of one solemnity more to be observed in it. Upon which she received a command from heaven, to proclaim the observation of this solemnity: For twenty years she prayed that God would excuse her, and make choice of a more worthy person; but none being found, she communicates it to Johannes de Lansenna, and he to Jacobus de Trevis, then Archdeacon of Liege, and afterwards, Urban IV. But although all the persons to whom it was communicated, highly approved it, yet she was not satisfied till one (of her gossips) named Isabella, after a whole year's praying for it, had the same thing revealed to her, with that circumstance, that this feast had always been among the secrets of the blessed Trinity; but now the time was come that it should be published to the world; and she, in one of her extasies, saw very distinctly all the heavenly orders upon their faces, supplicating God, that to confirm the faith of Christians, this day might be speedily observed. This Isabella was so much intoxicated by this vision, that out of the abundance of her spiritual drunkenness, (says the author) she declared she would promote the observing of this feast, although the whole world should oppose her; which (as we may suppose) Juliana rejoiced to hear; and hence forward they joined counsels to advance this solemnity. Juliana gets an ignorant young Priest to draw up an office for it; and while

noted birth-days had long been celebrated above, and others of them had been marked with terror and confusion in the infernal regions, before they were distinguished on earth. "At the birth of Mary," said they, "all the universe was moved; the angels descended in troops from heaven, and sang melodious hymns and songs in honour of the new-born spouse of the eternal King: At which the holy child, already endued with reason, felt great satisfaction and joy: And this celestial melody of the angelic choir was renewed every year on the same day; and it was by this that the birth-day of Mary, which had been long concealed, was revealed to a contemplative saint: Every year, on the 8th of September, he heard an angelic melody, and, in the transports of his admiration, he demanded what it meant; he was answered by God, that on that day the glorious Virgin was born." This is not unlike the vulgar tale of the bees, provided they be orthodox, singing their Christmas carols in the morning of the 25th of December. It was farther averred, "That after the annunciation of the birth of Mary to St Ann in the holy place, upon Gabriel's return to heaven, all the angels in Paradise began to sing and dance for joy, at the approaching

"he writ, she prayed, by which the office was so well composed, that it would melt the hardest hearts into devotion; and when it was seen by divines, they said it was not written by man but inspired by God himself; and yet when Pope Urban published his bull, upon the credit of these revelations for the celebration of this feast, he appointed Thomas Aquinas to compose an office for it, and rejected that divine office of Juliana." *Bzov. Annal. A. D. 1230. Arnol. Bostius. Petr. Præmonstr. Vigmer. Molanus.*

Another instance of the same kind, is the feast of the apparition of the Archangel Michael, constantly observed by the Church of Rome.

The account of its origin is extracted from the Roman Breviary, in the lessons appointed to be read on that day, being the 8th of May.

"It came to pass, that among the droves of cattle, the bull of a certain inhabitant wandered from the rest, which having been long sought for, they found in the entrance of a cave; and when one shot an arrow at him to destroy him, the arrow was driven back again to him that shot it: Which thing so affrighted them all, that they durst not come near the cave; the *Sipontines* consult their Bishop, who appointed three days fasting and prayer, to seek God in the case; after the three days, the Archangel Michael admonisheth the Bishop, that place was in his custody; and by that act he shewed, that they ought to worship God there, in remembrance of him and his fellow angels. The Bishop and people go accordingly thither, and they find the place already formed into the fashion of a temple, and there they perform the divine offices, where many miracles were afterwards wrought. Not long after, Pope *Boniface* dedicated the Church of St Michael, the 3d of the Kalends of October, in which the Church celebrates the memory of All Angels, but this day is consecrated to the Apparition of Michael the Archangel."

“ approaching birth of her that was to be their queen.” At that memorable event too, “ the light of the sun was “ doubled, the moon had no shades, but shone with a “ brightness like that of the sun, and around it an extraor- “ dinary star and fire appeared.” The book of the *Con- formities* attests it as a truth, upon the confession of a devil, that “ at the birth of St *Francis*, there was such a horrible “ commotion and affrightment in hell, that all the damned “ spirits believed that the day of judgment was arrived : “ And when they perceived that this was not the case, “ they said certainly some one is born who must make hell “ to tremble, and prove its destruction ; then the prince of “ darkness sent forth his messengers every where, to learn “ news of what had taken place : And they found that in “ that very same hour Francis d’Assise was born ; and they “ concluded that it was he that should be the cause of their “ destruction.” Thus, one way or another, the world was completely bewitched ; and the celebration of festivals became at last the most popular, the most thriving and lucrative part of Rome’s devotion.

From the beginning, it might easily have been foreseen whereunto this would grow ; and that liberty once lost could not be so easily again recovered. When once religion was supposed to be interested in the institution and observation of those days, the abolition of them could not be attempted without impiety, in the opinion of the superstitious multitude, and in the language of crafty priests. At the Reformation, those who were engaged in that design found what a *hydra* they had to combat, before they could draw the people from that inveterate superstition to a rational piety. Some of them were more daring and successful in it, and some less. Too many of them were content with lopping off some of the more luxuriant branches, alleging, that it was all the times could bear. Few had the courage, or the wisdom, to propose to extirpate it altogether ; and even where this was got happily accomplished, yet so addicted are the gross of mankind to their favourite holidays, though deprived of the authority of civil or Ecclesiastical laws, they are accustomed to some sort of celebration of them to this day, as they have received them by tradition from their fathers. Though left to their own choice, many will account it more eligible to drink, and commit the most shameful vices, than to prosecute their ordinary business on certain days. And yet we hear of some who, in defence of
them,

them, will fight as *pro aris et focis*, braving imperial edicts and armies rather than forego them. Such the dangerous effects of a false principle once admitted: Such the influence of superstitious habits, when they are suffered to take deep root.

Those who condemned the principle, and abolished the practice altogether, took the only effectual and consistent method to avoid the excess, and to prevent a return. The best way to keep free from too much of any thing that tends to evil, is to have nothing of it at all. As upon the principle of commemorative days being admitted to be lawful, pious or politic, a variety of them is unavoidable; so, while it is retained, there can be no consistency in abrogating a great number of such days as have formerly been consecrated, if otherwise allowed to have been unexceptionable, while others are still observed. Here the reformed, who continue to deal in this sort of devotion, stand upon more slippery ground than the Church of Rome: When attacked on this head, they must always find themselves hardly put to it, to maintain the consistency of their conduct. The Church of England, in this respect, is placed in a most hazardous and pitiful situation. While they are pelted by Papists on one side, and Puritans on the other, her advocates can find no common weapons that can be employed against both. While they defend themselves on one side, they leave the other quite exposed. Almost every argument of force, which they apply against the several holidays which she hath thought proper to reject, and to denominate Popish, can be pointed and returned with effect against those she retains*. Do they say, that the former are mere human institutions;—not necessary to true religion;—many of them introduced in late and corrupt ages;—tending to give undue honour to creatures;—to make religion burdensome,

* “ I have often found the Church of England writers regret the unhappy case of the Church of England, between the Papists, on the one hand, and the Puritans, on the other. And I must confess they have reason: For the same arguments by which they overthrow the Papists, serve the Puritans exactly to overthrow them by. The Church of England has rejected a great many ceremonies and holidays which the Church of Rome observes; when the Papists implead them upon this, their ordinary answer is, That God did not constitute them, and therefore it is no sin to neglect them. Now when the Puritans make the same defence for their rejecting the ceremonies and holidays which England still retains one may see with half an eye, that the Puritans answer the Church of England as effectually as the Church of England does the Papists.” *Dialogue between a Curate and a Countryman*, D II. p. 33.

denfome, inconsistent with the good of the commonwealth, and the like; all this recurs on their own head. Even in point of number, notwithstanding all the pretended moderation of the Church of England, it has often been demonstrated, that the catalogue of holidays yet retained in her kalendar, amounts to a greater number than those which, by Divine appointment, were enjoined in the law of ceremonies till the time of Reformation*.

I know that the advocates for the secular anniversary in question, will readily say, "That superstition has now lost its dominion, and we are not likely to return again to the absurd exploded system of multiplying days of religious observation of any kind to an unreasonable degree; and what is there in one single day to excite any apprehensions?" It is possible this may be true, but the time was, when there was but one human festival in the Christian world; and for some centuries we hear but of three or four that were generally regarded. Should we be content with one, and the first be also the last, yet it is only the difference of greater and less: *Majus et minus non mutant speciem*. And by one we may render ourselves accessory to the folly and superstition of all who are still observing them, as also to the higher degree of it in ages past; with the additional guilt of returning unto folly, after forsaking it, and solemnly renouncing it. After our nation met with such a great deliverance as this, both at the Reformation and at the Revolution, should we again join in affinity with the people of these abominations? Is it allowable, or charitable,

* "Festa sunt novem et viginti;—sed hisce addenda sunt et duo alia, 4. Kal. Junii, et Non. Novembris. Et cum jejuniorum diebus a quotidiana opera haud minus necessario cessandum est quam ipsis festis, eorum etiam numerus attendi debet. Jejunii autem indictæ sunt omnes feriæ sextæ, cujusq. per totum anni curriculum hebdomadis, modo dies natalis in eam non inciderit; quibus Quadragesima, præter ferias sextas, dies 33 complectens, Quatuor temporum 6. alii dies, Rogationum 3, et Caroli I. martyrium accedunt. Habemus jam festa 31, Jejunii autem dies 95. Hisce etiam festa 52. a Deo instituta adjiciamus, omniaque cum festa, tum jejunia, in unam summam collecta, dies 178 conficiunt. Dicant jam omnes æqui judices, an non esurientium operariorum vicem merito dolemus, quartumque præceptum a nobis hic recte urgetur; cum jam non septima, sed dimidia fere temporis pars sacris usibus dicanda sit? Haud injuria quæ ob aliam causam dixit prudentissimus rex David, ad hanc rem accommodari possint: Incidamus, quæso, in manum Jehovæ, nam magnæ sunt miserationes ejus, in manum autem hominis ne cadam. Porro si apostolus Petrus Judæorum cæremonias jugum appellavit, quod neque ipsi nec patres eorum portare valerent, quid de hoc Hierarchicorum jugo dixisset, omni Judaico longe graviori?" *Peircii. Vindic. c. 9. p. 383.*

table, to rivet the foolish prejudices, or foster the dangerous errors of others, though we run not to the same excess with them? Can we be innocent if we bid them *God speed*, by setting out with them, or by coming after them in the same road, though we think proper to stop when we have got half way, or perhaps at the first outset?

Grant, that neither a bias to religion nor superstition be the marked character of the present times,—Are we in no danger of ever returning to the latter? Human and arbitrary appointments may be cheerfully and zealously observed when divine institutions are disregarded. A people may be at once irreligious and superstitious, as ancient and modern experience clearly testifies. When the spirit and substance of true religion is lost, men still love to retain the false external vizard of it. We may think ourselves proof against superstition, and far above the danger of priestly impositions; but let us consider that another generation may arise, who may not prove equally enlightened, wise, manly, and liberal; and shall the strong cast the stumbling block before the weak?

C H A P. VI.

Ill effects of Festival-Commemorations on Christian Worship.—Introduced a necessity for Liturgies.—Occasioned fictitious Legends.—Rendered the Services burdensome, complex, and intricate.—Liturgic offices impertinently and absurdly composed.

AS the institution of festivals tended to introduce an unwarrantable power into the Church, inconsistent with Christian liberty, and prejudicial to mens secular interests; so it became no less prejudicial to the purity and simplicity of Gospel-worship. When so many days were settled, each of them for the commemoration of some distinct mystery, event, or person, which therefore must, in a peculiar manner, engage the attention, and employ the exercises of Christian assemblies on that day; it became proper, nay absolutely necessary, after they grew numerous, to provide distinct forms of service, adapted to all this variety of times and occasions. The general and ordinary methods of worship

ship would be found rather defective and jejune to answer the end of their solemnization. What would be sufficient for the Lord's days, would be inadequate and ill-suited to these. Whether the objects to be commemorated were doctrinal, historical, or biographical, it would be needful to dwell upon them particularly ; to explain the design and occasion, the mysteries or the wonders of these days, in order to enter into the spirit of them. Prayers, readings, homilies, praises, must all be framed with a special reference to them ; and in order to be savoury, must take a tincture or seasoning from the business of the day. As the Scriptures furnished them with no formularies of that sort ; and as it would be no very easy task for all who were to officiate to accomplish all this with decency and sufficient exactness, if always left to their own memory or invention, written liturgies, and human pre-composed forms must be called in to their aid. Hence sprang the immense variety of these upon record. Hence came these artificial divisions, and parcelling out of the public service. Hence a new cargo of Ecclesiastical terms and names. Hence a tedious, laborious, motley and multifarious system, consisting of common-prayers, lessons, epistles, gospels, litanies, and hymns,—which pestered the Church, and not only encumbered and contaminated her public worship, but corrupted her faith at the same time : Some of these were composed by particular Bishops, at first for their own use, or the use of particular Churches,—but as an endless variety and diversity appeared in these in process of time, the authority of the Church must be interposed to regulate them, and that of Rome as being mistress of the nations, must be preferred to all the rest, and be made the standard of uniformity. No new saint or festival was entered into the kalendar, without a new and proper office, and the invention of some peculiar rites.

To keep up the opinion of the sanctity of these days, it was expedient to magnify the occasion, and to exalt, as much as possible, the glory of the miracles, or merits, which they were at such pains and expence to celebrate. And where they could find little or nothing to say, fiction and lies must supply the defect. When Scripture was silent, tradition was made to speak ; and where history was either doubtful, or too sparing of materials,—or too plain and ordinary in the narration of facts,—the inventive brains of fanatical priests, monks, or silly women, must be set on work to produce a sufficiently memorable holiday-story :

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Hence the legendary tales, and fabulous acts and monuments which were published, and publicly read, or rehearsed, as sacred Gospel, or privately perused, and swallowed by the gaping credulous people, to animate them to extraordinary acts of devotion.

In the apostolic and primitive ages, the acts of the ministerial office were not complex or intricate: the whole form of the public service might be described within a narrow compass. Justin Martyr, in a few words, gives an account of the worship of the Christian Assemblies in his time: "They read the writings of the Apostles and Prophets; the reader having concluded, the person who presides in the assembly, makes a discourse to the people, exhorting them to imitate such good examples; then we all rise up and pray; which being over, they offer bread, with wine and water. The Bishop prays, and gives thanks according to the best of his power, and the people answered Amen *." But now it requires a volume, larger than the Bible, to set down the order and particular offices of this function. The Breviary, the inseparable attendant, and infallible directory of the present priesthood, contains, at least, 1000 8vo pages, in a very small type. And it must require not a little time and experience to be thoroughly acquainted with it, and expert at the use of it †. However skilful and mighty in the Scriptures a man might be, yet he could not be a scribe sufficiently instructed for the kingdom of Antichrist, unless he could bring forth out of the Ecclesiastical treasure, things new and old: He must now go to the pulpit or consecrated altar, puffing under the load of *Kalendars*, *Breviaries*, *Mistals*, *Hora Canonica*, and bulky martyrologies. He cannot be a divine without he be also an arithmetician, an astronomer, astrologer, an annalist, a historian and panegyrist. The first feast that we find a council employed in settling by canon, namely, *Easter*, engaged them in astronomical calculations, and produced the Paschal cycle of 19 years: and lest any should mistake the day, the Bishop

* *Iust. Apol.* 1.

† In the preface prefixed to the English common prayer, we are told, that "the number and hardness of the rules called the *Pie*, and the manifold changings of the service, was the cause, that to turn the book only was so hard and intricate a matter, that many times there was more business to find out what should be read, than to read it, when it was found out:—and that the order and decency of divine service was mangled and broken by the multitude of the responds, verses, vain repetitions, commendations and synodals."

shop of Alexandria was obliged every year to send circular letters to all the inferior clergy, to inform them of the day of their new moons, and of the set feasts.

Rubrics and Liturgies are very necessary appendages to holidays: not only to notify their regular return, but also to teach the proper ceremonial belonging to them. Without such directories, ignorant, lazy, or blundering curates, might neglect, or pass over in silence, the business of the day, or manage it in a very slabbering or shameful manner. They might be in danger of confounding the black, white, and red; the joyful and lugubrious together; or of paying their devoirs to the wounds of Christ, or the spear of Longinus, when they should be complimenting St Dominic, or contemplating the wounds of St Francis. A saint of December might be hurried out of his place into the summer solstice, or the dog-days; or a female one metamorphosed into a male. Instead of hailing Mary or St Genevieve, they might be addressing St Anthony or St Roch: and thus throw into confusion the whole pantheon, and turn topsy-turvy the whole celestial hierarchies. They might hereby be guilty of as great an indecorum as certain Japanese gentlewomen, profelyted by the Jesuits to Christianity, committed, who upon coming into a cabin, and seeing a painting of Venus and Cupid, fell down on their knees, and performed their devotion before it, taking it for the Virgin and the Child*. It was therefore wise to provide them with an Ecclesiastical Regulator, or *Ephemerides*, to correct time by, and to point out wherein the beauty of holiness consists for the season, in its several gradations through all the months of the year. This the Church of Rome hath done to purpose;—and her spiritual magazine is so amply provided, that her ministers can be at no loss from the beginning of January to the end of December. The Greek Church, which is little behind her in fast and festival observation, hath also plenty of Liturgies and offices adapted to all occasions.

It must be granted, indeed, that the compilers of such offices, have been in some difficulty, to find something always *a propos* to every occasion. They have handled their subjects sometimes awkwardly enough; and the lessons, and other parts of the service of these days, are but indifferently adjusted. On some, the grand and proper business

* Sarris, *Voyage to Japan*.

business of the day is scarcely ever suffered to peep into view; at other times, it seems to be hauled in as by head and shoulders*, and sometimes a dead silence is observed about it. Even in Liturgies reformed, and often reviewed, some impertinent critical heads, have pretended to discover several blunders, palpable errors, or improprieties†. But, however, such as they are, they always serve the turn;

* Like him who found the praises of St Margaret, in this passage of the gospel; "Simile est regnum cœlorum cuiusdam negotiatori quærenti pulchras Margaritas: qui nactus quandam magni prætii Margaritam.

† "The service-book appoints the vii. of Isaiah to be read for the epistle on the feast of the Annunciation; and the xl. of Isaiah for the epistle on the feast of St John Baptist. All the world knows these are not epistles, and why then should they be read for epistles."—The xii. of Ecclesiastes read October 30th yearly, has this sweet lesson, "Give not to the ungodly, hold back thy bread, and give it not unto him."—On the 12th of November, it represents the physician as one of the plagues of God in that bitter curse, *be that sinneth before his Maker, let him fall into the hand of the physician.* Yet it is hard to say whether it reckons the Doctors or the Bishops and Curates farthest from grace: the prayer for the clergy runs thus, Almighty and everlasting God, who alone dost great marvels, send down upon the Bishops and Curates the spirit of grace," &c. *Dial. between a Curate and Countryman.*

Of the liturgy reformed for England, we find even her own sons often complaining; "some even of our select psalms are not quite so apposite to the purposes they are applied to:—The two selected for the evening service on Whitsunday, may serve as instances; in neither of which can we find any thing that relates to the particular subject of the day.—Some of the lessons also, as selected for solemn seasons, are scarce so applicable as may be thought, or might be wished to the seasons they are applied to. Sometimes a whole chapter seems to be introduced for the sake of a word, or else a verse or two, which contains something of a sound, that might be supposed to favour the subject of the day; when yet the sense may be little or nothing to the purpose. We leave it to the learned and inquisitive to determine how far the first lesson for morning service on Easter even, (Zech. ix.) may be applicable to the solemnity of the day?—and whether this was not one of the lessons appointed for this day, in the times before the Reformation, in order to give some seeming countenance to the doctrine of purgatory and *limbus patrum*?—Thus, Psalm lxxviii. is for Whitsunday morning. Where is there a congregation that enters into the sense of it, and can see what are the particulars which the Prophet alludes to, or how pertinently they may be applied to the circumstance of this festival?—Then, again the first lesson for this morning, is Deut. xvi. to v. 18. It treats of three festivals of the Jews, and the manner in which they were to observe them. But, what do the Christians find here that is suitable to their Whitsunday? Might not then the vi. have done as well as the xvi.? Or might not any other chapter of the Bible that was more plain, be read with more profit?

Sometimes no sense at all, or scarce any can be made of the beginnings and conclusions of several lessons, when coming in or breaking off, with so little propriety as in some instances they do, as the first on the feast of St Matthew.—The second for evening service on Christmas.—The first for the same service on the feast of St Michael,—and the second in the morn-

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turn; and having been once adopted by holy Church, the use of them, *ipso facto*, solemnizes the day, and they must remain in their original state, *in perpetuam rei memoriam*. For, when a Liturgy has once passed the seal of a Papal, or Archiepiscopal authority, whether it be a *propos* or not; sense

ing of All-saints, beginning at v. 33. Heb xi. who, through faith subdued, &c.—Acts xxii. which is read three times a-year, ends with the word *saying*, when nothing further is said.—Dr Nichols said, there are some (he might have said many) things in the book of common prayer, which are not so clear and intelligible,—*deadly sins*,—*praise the Lord lustily*, &c. found a little odd. It is to be lamented, that ever and above the length of the usual service, the ministers of our Church sometimes find themselves obliged to lengthen out that service to a very unmeet proportion, by taking in the occasional offices, and the solemn festivals of the state, which sometimes may meet altogether, some of which are of an unusual length. Why should the three services ordinarily appointed for Sundays and holidays in the morning continue distinct, and yet be used, as if they were but one? There seem to be repetitions enjoined which may as well be avoided, plainly owing to the enjoining of several different services to be used at one and the same time. Thus, it may happen sometimes, that the Lord's prayer may be repeated nine times, or even thirteen, fourteen or fifteen times on the same day:—the true reason for our using so many repetitions as we do, is the determination of the Church; we doubt not, but if the Church had thought fit to enjoin twice as many repetitions of this prayer, we should readily have found a variety of reasons to shew, why she enjoined every one of them.—Might not some of the epistles and gospels too, be somewhat better collected.—The petitions in the collects are sometimes too general, and expressed with too much brevity. Is there any necessity for our repeating the same collect twice over, as we do on all Sundays and holidays: besides, we sometimes repeat two collects on these days, one for the day, and another for the season, and that in a close succession one after another. On Good Friday we repeat three, and some are of opinion, that we ought to repeat two more at the same time, *viz.* the collect for Ash-Wednesday, which the rubric tells us, is to be read every day in Lent, after the collect for the day, and that for Palm-Sunday, being the Sunday immediately preceding. As for the collects, we repeat on state festivals and fasts, which are usually two, and those of considerable length, it may seem less obvious to account for enjoining two such collects to be repeated. 'Many of our collects are very improperly introduced, with regard to place and matter.' On some vigils or eves of festivals we are directed to read the collect for the ensuing day, and therein, though it may perhaps be night, to call it the day then present, giving it the same title on the festival day following; as in the office for the purification of Mary. In our two collects for morning and evening, we say, *lighten our darknefs*, when most commonly it is not dark; and, *who hast brought us to the beginning of this day*, when we are brought near, if not quite upon high noon. Some Apocryphal lessons are ill chosen and offensive; contain things ridiculous, insignificant, false and repugnant to Scripture: Dr Lightfoot averring, that the Talmud may be read to as good advantage and as much profit, and far more: the wonder is the greater, that a divine of our Church, coming out of the committee at the last review, should rejoice so much that he and his friends had carried it for *Bel and the Dragon*," &c. &c. &c.

See *Free and Candid Disquisitions relating to the Church of England, passim*.

sense or nonsense ; common language, or barbarous ; though it should call a prophecy an epistle, or an epistle a gospel ; it must be privileged from criticism, becoming an essential part of the beauty of holiness.

The Church of England, while she continues the celebration of holidays, consistently enough, retains the use of a service-book : Though under the pretence of reformation, she hath sadly mangled and disturbed the liturgic order, and marred the holy beauty. From the full round moon of festival-perfection she hath taken off, I don't know how many snips ; now one at this side, and now one at that, without any other authority or rule than her own caprice ; so that the remainder presents to the eye but a dusky, odd and deformed figure. But enough of the old disk remains visible, to remind us of what she formerly was. Some new patches too of her own she hath added. For every anniversary solemnity of modern institution, which are mostly of a political kind, her clergy are provided with a new office, except on the accession days of the princes for the time being, which must still be mumbled over, although perhaps to bare walls and empty pews.

It is an absurdity in a Church that discards liturgies, as the Church of Scotland doth, to pretend to celebrate holidays. In this both Rome and Canterbury act a more consistent part, and deal more generously with their clergy, than the Assembly at Edinburgh have done. The former do not impose the servile task of making brick, without affording straw. The latter enjoins the celebration of a high day, and doth not tell how. It leaves the unusual task to the wisdom and skill of every parish minister, in-borough and landward, who must alone and unassisted set about it, and toil through it in his own way, and in the best manner he can. It will occasion at least the labour of conceiving a new prayer, and composing a new discourse for the occasion, which some of them may be little accustomed to. As none of them were alive, we presume when the memorable transactions happened, they must recur to histories, memoirs and gazettes : But whether they shall retail from Eachard or Burnet, Tindal or Smollet ; Macpherson or Maccaulay, is left wholly to their own discretion. If the days of the Charleses are honoured with their distinct offices, why should not the anniversary of King William, a more deserving man and prince, have been celebrated with equal solemnity ?

lemnity? Perhaps the Assembly, upon next appointment of the same kind, may see meet to supply the deficiency.

C H A P. VII.

The grossest Idolatry in the World began in giving undue Honours to the visible Causes, Means or Instruments of Divine Benefits—Apparent in the Physical Idolatry of Pagans—And in the Worship of Demons or deceased Heroes.—The Rise and Prevalence of this Worship among the Egyptians—Greeks and Romans—And Modern Idolaters.

WHEN the torch of Revelation doth not illuminate the steps of mankind in religion; or when they begin to deviate from its prescriptions, and the guidance of right reason at the same time, it is inconceivable to what extremes of folly and impiety they will at last proceed. Forgetful of the point from whence they set out, they wander in a maze, and advance with rapid career, though step by step, to do what, at first view, would appear shocking and degrading to human nature, and incompatible with common understanding.

The extremes of superstition, as well as of irreligion, are arrived at by degrees. If the various modes of ancient and modern idolatry were not too well attested as facts, to be called in question, they would be accounted in their nature to be incredible or impossible. To be told of some of the grosser instances of it, without any knowledge of the principles of human nature from whence they result, the seemingly laudable intentions and innocent customs which prepared the way for them, the specious, but fallacious shew of reason, or the concatenation of ideas or gradation of acts by which they were introduced, they must appear equally absurd and extravagant as the wildest fables of romance. When a person by the aid of history and philosophy is let into the train of process, and sees the several stages of it, from its most refined to its most gross instances, following as links in a chain, while his surprise and wonder at the observation of the more palpable excesses may be a little abated, he will be obliged at the same time to look on the specious beginnings, and the most distant approaches to-
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wards them, in a more suspicious and alarming light, than the unthinking vulgar. He cannot but consider these lesser commencing acts, of which it may not be easy to see the harm, in a serious point of view, as leading to greater evils, discerning innumerable latent mischiefs, as the plagues which lay concealed in Pandora's box, and flew abroad to the destruction and terror of the human race, when once opened. The prudential maxim, *obsta principiis*, will strike such a person with double force and beauty, as supported by the highest reason.

What if it will be found, upon searching the records of false religion, that the very worst kinds of idolatry, even the worshipping of demons and saints, fourfooted beasts and reptiles, statues and human bones, have owed their birth to *grateful and pious commemorations!*

There is reason to suppose, that as all mankind, at first, were of one speech, so they all agreed in acknowledging and adoring the one Supreme Deity. Even when they began to vary in their form and rites, it is probable none of them entertained a thought, at first, of withdrawing their adoration from him, to impart it unto creatures. It would seem, the utmost they meant, for a considerable time, was only to honour God in his works, whether animated or inanimated. What distinguished regard they paid to these, was considered as part of the tribute due to the Lord of all; while they were viewed as the mirror of his perfections, the instruments of his divine agency, or the medium by which it was to be conveyed to him. In these they thought they beheld his glory, and in these they professed to acknowledge his goodness and beneficence.

It is generally allowed, that the earliest species of idolatry that prevailed in the world, as well as that which has been most universal, and most lasting among the Pagan nations, was the worship of the heavenly luminaries, as being the most sublime, splendid and useful parts of the visible creation, and so the likeliest to attract their wonder, and the fittest to become to them the substitute of the invisible God *. When they beheld them going forth in their brightness,

* Diodorus Siculus says, " That the most ancient people of Egypt, looking up to the world above them, and the nature of the universe, and being struck with astonishment and admiration, supposed the sun and moon to be eternal and principal gods; the great principles of life and being; and that these governed the world."

ness, they began to think, it could be no crime to fall to their devotions, when the grandeur, majesty and bounty of the Creator was so conspicuously manifested before their eyes, and his virtue so sensibly communicated to the inferior world, by these his ministers, productive of innumerable benefits. From sentiments of wonder and gratitude, they would naturally proceed to external tokens and expressions of it; as bowing their bodies toward the rising sun, or kissing the hand, till by degrees they lost God in his works, and sought no higher object, addressing their prayers, offering sacrifices, and appointing times of feasting and rejoicing, in honour of the king and queen of heaven, as they learned to design them. From accounts transmitted both in sacred and profane history, it appears, this superstition very early prevailed in all the eastern nations; as in Egypt, Chaldea, Arabia, and sometimes in Judea, though expressly forbidden from the beginning of the Jewish law. Traces of it are found in the chief Egyptian deities; in the Baals and Astaroths, and other idols of the ancient nations, under different names. It made a principal part of the Greek and Roman idolatry. It has been found among the Persians, Gauls and Germans, as well as among the modern Brachmans, Chinese and Tartars. It was also diffused through the islands and continent of America. With what solemnity and splendor was the worship of the sun established among the inhabitants of Mexico and Peru!

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“ It hath been delivered down to us by the ancients, saith Aristotle, and those of old times, both that the stars are gods, and that the Divinity comprehendeth whole or universal nature.” Plato says, ‘ The first inhabitants of Greece appear to me to have esteemed these only to be gods, as many of the barbarians now do, the sun and moon, the earth, and stars, and heaven.’ *Arist. Met. l. 1. 14. cap. 8. Plat. in Crat.*

Plutarch delivers it as his opinion, that “ it cannot, without great absurdity be denied, that there is a providence, and that the sun and moon are animated, whom all men worship, and to whom they offer up sacrifices and prayers.”

When Julian took it on him to restore Paganism, the worship of the sun seems to have been the great object of his frantic zeal; he delivered a pompous oration in his praise, wherein he represents the sun as the parent of mankind, and the bestower of all the good things that we enjoy, concluding with supplications to him for peace and safety here, and for joy and happiness hereafter.

According to Macrobius, the sun was the one universal deity, adored under several names and characters; and the priests and divines, in their holy ceremonies, were wont to use this form of address; O almighty, or all-governing, Sun, the spirit, the power, the light of the world. *Macr. Sat. l. 1. cap. 23.*

When this spirit of false gratitude and blind mistaken devotion had carried men to venerate the heavenly host, it was not long before they proceeded, under its influence, to look out for other objects, nearer and more familiar. From the celestial regions they descended to the terrestrial, and there found them in great abundance. All the several manifestations or operations of the Deity in the world were considered as so many distinct objects of their veneration. All nature was soon replenished with fictitious divinities; some of them are in the air; some in the sea, rivers, fountains; others in hills, woods, gardens or corn-fields; till they became incapable of distinguishing between Creator and creature; but as Dr Cudworth expresses it, "They called every thing by the name of God, and God by the name of every thing*." Nor were they content with deifying the whole and the several parts of visible nature, which are called the physical deities, but proceeded to do the same with animals,—and even with the qualities, habits, faculties and passions of rational beings, as mind, faith, virtue, health, wealth, concord, honour, victory, liberty,—to all which temples were reared; and, in general, every thing that could be expressed by one word as a person, was not merely personified, but made either a god or a goddess. All human concerns and actions were put under the patronage and superintendence of some invisible power.

The objects most striking, and most beneficial to mankind, may be supposed first to have attracted their attention and worship. Some real or pretended benefit, which they received or expected from them, was the great ostensible reason, and the powerful motive inducing them to be so lavish of their altars and religious honours. "† There are
" many

* "Ex elementis ante alia, ut arbitror, tellus divinos obtinuit honores.—
"Non mirum, si, ab æthereis corporibus prolapsi, etiam sint ad cultum
"telluris: quando post cælos ea princeps est mundi pars. Etiam, uti in
"cælis sol et sidera, continuo se ingerunt in sensus; ita in partibus mundi
"inferioribus, primo oculis et corporis et mentis, telluris se bona offere-
"bant." Voss. *de Orig. Idol.* l. 2. c. 51.

† "Multæ autem aliæ naturæ deorum, ex magnis beneficiis eorum, non
"sine causa, et a Græciæ sapientissimis, et majoribus nostris constitutæ no-
"minatæque sunt: quicquid enim magnam utilitatem generi afferret hu-
"mano, id non sine divina bonitate erga homines fieri arbitrabantur. Tum
"autem res ipsa, in qua vis inest major aliqua, sic appellatur, ut ea ipsa vis
"nominetur Deus, &c.—Quarum omnium rerum quia vis erat tanta ut sine
"Deo regi non posset, ipsa res deorum nomen obtinuit, quo ex genere cu-
"pidinis et voluntatis, et lubentiniæ veneris, vocabula consecrata sunt."
De Nat. Deor. l. 2.

“ many other natures of the gods,” says Cicero “ (not without reason, because of their great benefits) instituted and named by the wisest men of Greece, and by our ancestors : for whatever could bring great profit to mankind, that thing they thought could not be made without the divine bounty towards men.” The land of Egypt is fertilized by the river Nile ; hence Nile became a god, and a great festival was every year observed in honour of him. A remarkable statue of this idol was brought to Rome, where it still remains. The Greeks imitated the Egyptians in this sort of worship. The people of Siam, who have above 14,000 pagods in their kingdom, and observe many festivals, have one in particular, in honour of their rivers which enrich their country ; on which they have many boats on their rivers illuminated, and sacrifices are offered to *Sommona-Codom*. They have another annual feast in memory of the harvest, when they offer up thanksgivings to their idols, and march in procession from one place to another. The Chinese, like the ancient idolaters, have gods whom they imagine superintend all their public affairs, each having his own department. *Cang-y* is worshipped among them as the god of the lower heavens, who has always three ministering spirits to attend him ; the first of whom sends down rain to refresh and nourish the earth ; the second has the command of the sea, to whom all their navigators make vows, and perform them when they return home ; and the third presides over births, and is called the god of war. The Tonquinese, besides adoring the heavenly bodies, and the four cardinal points, have also their god of the kitchen ; one for arts and trades ; another for buildings, whose business it is to protect houses from fire, lightnings, winds, &c. They have grand festivals on the first and fifteenth of every month : In the sixth month, they celebrate one to their idol *Tham-no*, who is the preserver of their corn, as Ceres was believed to be among the Greeks *. Similar notions and institutions may be discovered among all idolatrous nations.

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It is true they degenerated so far as to pay divine honours to things evil and hurtful, as well as beneficial ; “ tantus error fuit, ut perniciosius etiam rebus, non modo deorum nomen tribuerentur, sed etiam sacra constituerentur,” as the same writer observes. The Athenians had a temple to contumely and impudence ; the Romans to fear, to power, to evil fortune. Temples were also deified, and sacrifices offered to the furies and evil genii. But herein also they supposed, that these malevolent divinities had it in their power to bestow favours upon them, at least of a negative kind, and that they might be rendered propitious to them.

* Hurd's *Hist. of all Relig.* p. 59, 60.

It would seem then, that self-love or interest, rather than fear, produced first that multiplicity of idol-deities, which the blinded people honoured. Even when they were sunk so low as to pay religious respect to almost all animals, insects and plants, not excepting the basest and most contemptible, the reasons they alleged in their own justification, were either the general or the local usefulness of these things, or that they were symbols of their several divinities, whose particular powers were manifested in these kinds of creatures, more than in others; or else they held them for allegories drawn from natural philosophy, or containing some moral instruction. "The very Egyptians, who are so much laughed at," says Cicero, "have not consecrated any beast, but for some advantage that they draw from it*." Thus, with them the ibis, the ichneumon, the cat and dog, as well as the bull, were sacred. The *creptius ventris*, on the same principle, was so also among the Romans; and after they had got into the way of immortalizing great and beneficial events, together with the instruments of them, a goose, on a certain festival, was carried about the city in honourable triumph; because, by its cackling, it once had saved the capitol; while the poor dog, for neglecting to bark on that memorable occasion, was solemnly crucified.

The same ideas gradually introduced another species of idolatry, of the most pernicious kind, and which some suppose to have been the most ancient of any, namely, the deification and worship of mortal man, under the name of heroes, demons, or demi-gods. This crept it under a pretence of filial piety, veneration for princes, or gratitude to public benefactors. Whoever had rendered himself illustrious, or had conferred any signal benefit on mankind, was commemorated after his decease with extravagant honours; his virtues were extolled, his heroic exploits rehearsed, pompous funeral rites were performed, sepulchres and statues were raised to his memory; and in process of time, priests and altars, sacrifices and libations, games and solemn festivals were consecrated to him. Philo-biblius, quoted by Eusebius, affirms, "That the most ancient barbarians, especially the Phenicians and Egyptians, from whom other people took this custom, reckon
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* "Ipsi illi qui irridentur Ægyptii, nullam belluam, nisi ob aliquam utilitatem quam ex ea caperent, consecraverunt." *De Nat. Deor.* l. 1.

“ ed those among the greatest Gods, who had been the inventors of things useful and necessary to human life, and who had been benefactors to the nations; and it was to them they consecrated pillars and statues, and dedicated sacred festivals *.” It was this first introduced the worship of images in human form. Plutarch asserts, that Ninus of Babylon, by an ordinate affection for his father Belus, gave the first occasion to this kind of worship, by causing the statue of this prince to be adored after his death. But by whomsoever it was first introduced, it soon spread universally, and became the most popular kind of superstition, that grew into an endless system, and furnished materials for the poetical mythology. Not only the private families and the mass of the common people ran greedily into it; but it found particular countenance from magistrates, and the public laws of the most civilized states, under a pretext of its policy and utility to the commonwealth, as being an incitement to virtuous and noble deeds; whereby the pride of man was flattered, with the secret hope of obtaining a perpetual name, if not divine honours after death. These honours were not confined to kings and legislators, great generals and heroes, in the modern sense of the word; nor yet to the patrons of learning, promoters of curious arts, and authors of useful inventions; but also were decreed or allowed to such private persons as had distinguished themselves by such actions as were supposed to be reputable to the dead, and exemplary to the living †. These were often

* Euseb. *Prepar. Evang.* l. i. cap. 9.

† “ The founders of improved policy; the great masters of arts or arms; the triumphant invaders of foreign liberties; or the more enviable guardians, or restorers of their own national ones; these are some of those glittering images, which, in our advanced days, generally form the character of an hero. Hardly, indeed, shall we be brought to enter into so disparaging an idea of it, as yet antiquity assures us to have been the true original one: in which the occupation of an ordinary husbandman, thatcher, huntsman, or mechanic of the most sordid class, a mere common blacksmith, as Lucian has it, *passing all his days amidst sparks and smoke*, was a sufficient recommendation to heroism in his lifetime, and to deification afterwards. For this was the practice of the ruder and more barbarous ages, that in the eagerness of a too forward gratitude to those first benefactors, and to their kind, who had in any degree contributed to the better accommodation of life, they no sooner saw them removed by death, from the society and commerce of men, but they exalted them to that of the gods. Nor was indeed the gradation at all unsuitable to the genius of those times, that having first worshipped their natural benefactors, the sun, moon, and stars, in gratitude for the several natural benefits derived to them from their agency and influence, they should next pay the same compliment to their civil ones, who had, as it were, improved upon what

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ten consecrated to pious and eternal memory, either by their country or their kindred; at the time of their decease, or more commonly a long time after. And as hence all nations came to have their tutelary gods called *divi indigetes*, their household gods (*dii lares et penates*) and their *Sacra gentilitia*, or the peculiar religions of particular families. And as the true history of many of these demon-gods was either utterly unknown, or hid in the uncertainty of remote antiquity, or else contained nothing extraordinary, in order to spread the air of divinity about them, and to warrant the *apothefis*, common facts were magnified into wonders*, and fabulous stories invented and told of them at pleasure. To give them greater honour, and to preserve their names more certainly from perishing, they called them by the names of certain stars, whereby their celestial and terrestrial deities were confounded together, and worship paid to both under the same names, though often described as having very different relations, qualities, and actions belonging to them, which involved their worshippers, and all the learned since, in inextricable mazes of confusion and contradiction, in pretending to give any distinct account of them. The heroic

“ the others had began; had carried their beneficent design into still farther execution; enlarged the sphere of human happiness, and instructed their contemporaries at once to multiply the comforts of life, and guard against the inconveniences inseparable from a merely natural state of it.” Coventry. *Hist. of False Relig.* p. 248, &c.

* “ Gratitude for benefits received is a natural result of that inborn self-love which is the great ruling principle of human action; and would operate, we may easily imagine, with a force unknown to us of later days, in those ages of rude undisguised nature, the simplicity of which could only be equalled by their extreme helplessness. Under such circumstances, the slightest services to the public would be received with all the rapture of the most important obligation, and raise the reputation of their author to an height something more than mortals, as indeed they might well do, considering the low standard of ordinary attainments in the same earlier times. For it is in this view I cannot, I must confess, help looking upon the renowned labours of the heroic ages, though generally represented to us, by ancients as well as moderns, with a pomp of description, which might even do honour to a much more advanced and embellished period of affairs; but the truth is, being complimented with divinity, by the grateful weakness of their own times, they had both the natural uncertainty of tradition, and the disposition which most people have to heighten what they do not understand, to exalt them into wonders, I had almost said worthy of divinity, in succeeding ages; whilst the few who were wise enough to see through the delusion, were at the same time crafty enough to let it pass with the rest of the world, till they had by degrees extracted a system of refined and gainful politics, out of what was at first mere artless admiration, and ignorant amazement.” *Ibid.* p. 251, &c.

heroic deities of one country were also confounded with others of the same quality in another, whether they were the same historic persons originally or not. Thus the Osiris of Egypt, the Bel of the Chaldeans, the Baal of the Phenicians, whose worship Jezebel brought from Tyre into Israel, signified both a deified mortal and the sun*. Jupiter Capitolinus, who was styled *Optimus Maximus*, the father of gods and men, was identified and worshipped promiscuously with the Jupiter Cretensis, whose sepulchre was shown. Jove, the thunderer, and the adulterer, ravisher, &c. were considered as one and the same†. Thus men of human passions, and those whose lives and characters exhibited nothing but examples of flagrant vices and monstrous villanies, were exalted to the highest heavens, and became the supreme objects of the worship of a degenerate world.

Diodorus

* Seden. *de Diis Syr. Prol. cap. 3. p. 51.*

On the same subject Lord Herbert observes, "Initio heroas in astris plerumque, astra in heroibus colentes, adeo ut cognomines ita essent, neque fatis judicari posset, nam aniles de iis contextæ fabulæ ad astra mystice, an ad homines mythice pertinerent." *De Rel. Gent. c. xi.*

Pliny in his *Natural History* says, that "the most ancient way of men paying their acknowledgments to their benefactors (*bene merentibus*) was, by deifying them after their decease, and that the several appellations of the gods and of the stars are derived from the meritorious actions of men." *Quippe et omnium aliorum nomina deorum, et quæ supra retuli syderum, ex hominum nata sunt meritis.* lib. 2. "The first idolatry therefore," says Toland, "did not proceed from the beauty, or order, or influence of the stars, but men observing books to perish by fire, worms, or rottenness, and iron, brass, or marble, not less subject to violent hands, or the injuries of the weather, they imposed on the stars (as the only everlasting monuments) the proper names of their heroes, or of something memorable in their history. Eratosthenes the Cyrenian wrote a book of the constellations, yet extant, wherein he delivers the reasons of their names, which are perpetual allusions to ancient history, though wonderfully disfigured by time, and for the most part mere fables." *Letters to Serena. Let. 3. p. 74.*

† Ille pater, rectorque deum, cui dextra trifurcis
Ignibus armata est, qui nutu concutit orbem,
Induitur tauri faciem. Ovid. *Metam. l. 2.*

Unde nil majus generatur ipso;
Nec viget quidquam simile aut secundum.
Gentis humanæ pater atque custos
Orte Saturno. Hor. *l. 1. Od. 12.*

In like manner Juno boasts in Virgil:

—— Divum incedo regina Jovisque
Et foror et conjux. *Æn. l. 1.*

Diodorus Siculus testifies, that the Cretans maintained, that most of the gods were born among them, being men, who for their benefits to the public, had obtained immortal honours *. Calimachus, in his hymn to Jupiter, charges the Cretans as liars, for pretending that they had his sepulchre among them, whereas he never died, but existed always; yet he himself affirms the same Jupiter to have been born in Arcadia. Euhemerus, the Messinian, as Lactantius informs us, wrote a history of the births, marriages, offspring, actions, government, and death of these ridiculous deities, and shewed, as Cotta, in Cicero, notes, "both when they died, and where their sepulchres were to be seen †." In another place, the Roman philosopher scruples not to say, "That almost the whole heaven is filled with the human race: That upon searching into the ancient accounts, and what the Greek writers have delivered from them, it will be found, that even those that are accounted the greater deities, were taken from among men into heaven: That their sepulchres were shewn in Greece; and that these things were delivered in the mysteries themselves, as those that were initiated knew ‡".

It was in the Eleusinian, or greater mysteries, that these discoveries were made, which were originally celebrated in Egypt, in honour of Isis and Osiris, their deified king and queen, wherein the death of the good Osiris, and the affliction of Isis in consequence thereof, was every year mystically represented. Something similar to these was represented in the Syrian rites §, especially in the great festival appointed to

* L. 5.

† "Ab Euhemero autem et mortes et sepulturæ demonstrantur deorum." *De Nat. Deor. l. 1. c. 42.*

‡ "Totum prope cælum nonne humano genere completum est? Si vero scrutari vetera, et ex his ea quæ scriptores Græciæ prodiderunt, eruere coner; ipsi illi, majorum gentium dii qui habentur, hinc a nobis profecti, in cælum reperiuntur. Quare quorum demonstrantur sepulchra in Græcia reminiscere, quoniam es initiatus, quæ traduntur in mysteriis; tum denique quam late hoc pateat intelliges." *Tusc. Diss. l. 1. cap. 12.*

"Suscepit autem vita hominum consuetudoque communis, ut beneficiis excellentes viros in cælum fama ac voluntate tollerent; hinc Hercules, hinc Castor et Pollux," &c. *De Nat. Deor. l. 2.*

§ The ceremonies used in the feasts of Isis and Adonis in Phenicia, they are commonly supposed to be the same. Jerom on Ezek. viii. 14. conceives that the weeping of Thammuz refers to the idolaters who celebrated these feasts of Adonis. On this idea also, Milton has founded the following beautiful description, which he hath given of this festival.

————Thammuz came next behind,
Whose annual wound in Lebanon, allur'd

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to commemorate the death of Adonis, which was observed with such signs of sorrow by the eastern women, and converted the next day into excessive joy, on pretence that letters came, importing that he was alive and taken up into heaven. With some variations, these eastern mysteries were transported into Greece, and were dedicated to the honour of Ceres*. Others were also instituted in honour of their patron deities, in all their chief cities. Though Plutarch, in his treatise, *de Isid. et Osir.* censures Euhemerus for representing the gods as having been of mortal race; yet he makes it there appear, that some of the Egyptian priests themselves, speaking of Osiris, whom they call the great and good, the lord of all, gave an account of his birth, his actions and exploits; that he was King of Egypt; and that he drew the Egyptians from a savage beastly way of living, by teaching them agriculture and the use of grain, giving them laws and teaching them how to honour the gods. They mentioned the years of his reign; the time and circumstances of his death; and pretended to shew his sepulchre.

But however some were disposed to disguise the matter for the credit of their religion, after Christianity had clearly exposed the absurdity and wickedness of that wretched system; yet nothing is more indubitable, than that the greater part of the heathen idols had been originally mortal men; and the principal part of their worship, and the most pompous and solemn parts of it were nothing else than posthu-

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mous

The Syrian damsels to lament his fate,
In am'rous ditties all a summer's day;
While smooth Adonis, from his native rock,
Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
Infected Sion's daughters with like heat,
Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
Ezekiel saw, when, by the vision led,
His eyes surveyed the dark idolatries
Of alienated Juda.

Par. Lost, b. i. v. 446.

* Arnobius tells us, that the history of Ceres, and her teaching the people the use of corn, was the principal subject of the Eleusinian mysteries. On this account they had the name of initiations, or beginnings, as Turnebius notes, "ab initiis vitæ, inventis a Cerere legibus. in quarum rerum memoriam fiebant, cum antea ferino ritu homines sibi vitam propagabant." Arnob. *adv. Gent.* l. 5. Turn. *Comment. in Cicer. de Leg.* lib. 2.

Of the same import is a passage of Cicero in his book against Verres. *cap. 27.*

mous honours paid to their memories, of which they were supposed to be conscious; and in return for which they were believed to become their protectors, and to be able to bestow signal benefits upon their votaries. These were the demons or devils, to which the Gentiles sacrificed instead of God. Not only the fables of their poets, the testimony of their historians, but the whole fabric of their worship proclaimed it; the tenor of their laws avouched it, and the doctrine of their philosophers allowed it. Among the ancient laws of the twelve tables were the following: "Let the gods be worshipped, as well those who have always been thought heavenly, as those whose merits have placed them in heaven, as Hercules, Bacchus, Esculapius, Castor and Pollux, Romulus." "Let those commendable qualities, by which heroes have obtained heaven, be ranked among the gods, and let temples be erected to them." "Let every one enjoy the temples consecrated by his forefathers, the sacred groves in his fields, and the oratories of his Lares: and let every one use the rites observed in his own family, and by his ancestors in the worship of his domestic gods." "Let every man constantly and perpetually observe his family festivals." "Let law-suits be suspended on the festivals of the gods, and let the slaves have leave to celebrate them, after they have done their work: and that it may be known on what days they fall, let them be set down in the kalendars*." Among the Attic laws, this was one: "Let it be a law among the Athenians, for ever sacred and inviolable, always to render due homage in public towards the gods, and native heroes, according to the usual custom of the country, and with all possible sincerity, to offer in private first-fruits, with anniversary cakes†." Socrates taught, that "he that honoureth the gods according to the laws, honoureth them as he ought‡". And in his apology before his judges, he wonders how Miletus (his accuser) came to know that he did not esteem them to be gods, whom the city regarded as such, since many had seen him sacrificing on the common festivals, and at the public altars. The same may be said of Plato: And in his republic, he would have "all those who die valiantly in
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* "Divos et eos qui cœlestes semper habiti, colunt; et illos quos in cœlum merita vocarint, ut Hercules," &c.

† Potter's *Grec. Antiq.* vol. 1. p. 136.

‡ Xenoph. *Memor. lib.* 1. cap. 1. & *lib.* 4. cap. 6.

“ the field to be made demons, and the oracle to be consulted how they should be buried and honoured; and accordingly their sepulchres ever afterwards to be served and adored as the sepulchres of demons.” As to the office of these demons, as well as those who never had lived in human bodies, he taught, that “ God is not approached by men, but all the intercourse between the sovereign celestial gods and men, is performed by the mediation of demons; that they are reporters and carriers from men to the gods, and again from the gods to men; of the supplications and prayers of the one, and of the injunctions and rewards of devotion from the other *.” Alike account is given of them by Apuleius, who represents them as “ carrying up the prayers of men to the gods, and bringing down the favours of the gods to men; and that all things on earth are performed by their assistance and ministry †.” Here then we have the true origin and foundation of the religious worship paid to saints and angels.

When Paul preached Christ to the Athenians, as risen from the dead, that people, so much accustomed and addicted to the superstitious worship of the dead, presently supposed him to be the setter forth of some new demon-gods, as the word in the original denotes; and as the examination of the pretensions of strange gods belonged to the court of Areopagus, the cause was referred unto it. In his apology there, he severely taxes them with their excessive superstition in this respect: “ Ye men of Athens, I perceive that you are in all things too superstitious,” or too full of demons

* Plat. in *Sympos.*

† “ Cæterum sunt quædam divinæ mediæ potestates inter summum æthere et infimas terras, in isto interstitæ aeris spatio, per quas et desideria nostra et merita ad deos commeant: hos Græco nomine Demones nuncupant, inter terricolos coelicolasque vectores, hinc precum, inde donorum, qui ultro citroque portant hinc petitiones inde suppetias: ceu quidem utriusque interpretes et salutigeri.—Cuncta cœlestium voluntate et numine et auctoritate, sed demonum obsequio et opera et ministerio fieri arbitrandum est.”

“ Est et secundo significatu species demonum, animus humanus emeritis stipendiis vitæ corpore suo abjurans: hunc vetere Latina lingua reperio Lemurem dictitatum.—Cum vero incertum est quæ cuique eorum sortitio evenierit, utrum *Lar* sit an *Larva*, nomine *manem Deum* nuncupant; scilicet honoris gratia Dei vocabulum additum est. Quippe tantum eos Deos appellant qui ex eodem numero iuste ac prudenter vitæ curriculo gubernato, pro numine postea ab hominibus proditi; fanis et ceremoniis vulgo advertuntur; ut in Bœotia Amphiarus, in Africa Mopsus, in Egypto Osiris, alius aliubi gentium, Æsculapius ubique.” Apul. *De Deo Socrat.*

mons already, as the word may be rendered *. A greater number of festivals, it is said, were celebrated in Athens, than in any other city. The Greeks and Romans improved greatly upon the religion of the Orientals; serving not only the ancient divinities, which they had borrowed from them, in the manner which they called religion, but also still creating new ones of their own, or adopting them from their neighbours, with whom they had intercourse, or whom they had subdued. The latter, in their wars, had a custom of evocating in a solemn manner, the tutelary gods of any city, when they were about to attack it, inviting them over to join their standard, vowing for a reward to build them temples, and to appoint solemn sports for them †. A decree of their senate could at any time exalt a mortal to divinity at pleasure ‡. And of these honours they were not sparing, especially in the later ages of their empire: When not only their emperors were deified upon their decease, by a long and pompous process appointed for that purpose, called the Apotheosis, the ceremonies of which are described at large in the antiquities and histories of that people; but they also lavished them upon their wives, their mistresses, or unworthy

* *Δεισιδαιμονιστής*: The word by etymology signifies a worshipper of demons, and was anciently used in this sense, but was afterwards applied to a superstitious person: as the Latin word which denotes that disposition or quality which renders a man such, seems also to be derived from the excessive veneration which was paid to the dead, and the custom of honouring their memorials. So Lactantius, "*Superstitiosi* vocantur aut ii qui superstitem memoriam defunctorum colunt, aut qui parentibus suis superstites, celebrant imagines eorum domi tanquam deos penates. Nam qui novos sibi ritus defumebant, ut deorum vice mortuos honorarent, quos ex hominibus in cœlum receptos putabant, hos *superstitiosos* vocabant. Eos vero qui publicos et antiquos deos colerent *religiosos* nominabant." Unde Virgilius; *Vana superstitio veterumque ignara deorum*. Lactant. *Instit. Divin.*

† A form of this ceremony of evocation is given in Macrobius of the following tenor: "If it be a god, if it be a goddess that hath the city of Carthage in protection;—and thou especially, whosoever thou art, the patron of this city and people, I pray and beseech, and with your leave require you to abandon the people and city of Carthage, to forsake the places, temples, ceremonies and inclosures of their city; to go away from them, and to strike fear, terror and astonishment into that people and city, and having left it to come to Rome, to me and mine, and that our cities, temples, &c. be more acceptable to you; that you would take the charge of me, of the people of Rome, and of my soldiers,—if you do so, I vow, &c." Macrobi. *Saturn. lib. 3. cap. 8.*

‡ "For this they are justly derided by Tertullian: "Those are not gods whom men have not decreed so to be, and who have been condemned by their sentence.—Wonderful!—the Godhead among you depends on the approbation of man: Is a god not acceptable to man, he shall not be a god: man must be favourable to his god." *Apol. cap. 5. § 13.*

unworthy favourites. Thus Antinous, the minion of Adrian, had many temples built for him, and his memory was celebrated by a feast and sports appointed for him, with priests and an oracle at his tomb. Several who were impatient to enjoy these honours, and sweets of divinity, and lest they should miss of them upon their decease, thought proper to anticipate them in their lifetime; and in this, they found their sycophants very ready to gratify them *. But, what is yet more strange, those who made pretensions to philosophy, were tainted with the epidemic infection, and were seized with the common phrenzy of canonizing those for whom they had a high regard, after their decease. Cicero, after the loss of his daughter Tullia, could scarce think, speak or write of any thing else, but of building a costly fane, of offering incense and sacrifices, and presenting supplications to his Tullia †. Socrates, whom some have so highly extolled as a martyr to the Unity, not only in his life-time was a conformist to the vulgar devotion, and at his death ordered a cock to be sacrificed to Æsculapius; but, what may seem almost incredible, had divine honours paid to himself after his death, by some of his disciples, who not only celebrated his birth-day, but dedicated a temple and a fountain to his name. We read that the Athenians, repenting of their unjust sentence, as a kind of reparation, erected a statue to perpetuate his memory: And his admirers
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* Domitian commanded, that in all writings, he should be stiled a god; and that his images should be of gold and silver, and placed in the capitol among the gods. Commodus and Dioclesian assumed the same title, and required their images to be worshipped. Caligula caused a temple to be erected for him, and took up his abode in the capitol, that he might dwell with Jupiter. He would sit in the midst of the images of the gods, sometimes with a golden beard and belt like Jupiter, sometimes with a trident like Neptune. He caused the most costly fowls and birds to be sacrificed to him: but being angry that Jupiter was preferred to him, he built a temple in his palace; caused the heads of most of the idols to be broken off, and his own placed in their room, threatened to banish Jupiter out of the city, because, by rain, he hindered his pastimes, &c. *Fulgos. lib. 9. cap. 5.*

† "Fanum fieri volo; neque hoc mihi erui potest: sepulchri similitudinem effugere, non tam propter poenam legis studeo, quam ut maxime assequar *apothéosin*: quod poteram, si in ipsa villa facerem: sed, ut sæpe locuti sumus, commutationes dominorum reformido. In agro ubicumque fecero mihi videor assequi posse, ut posteritas habeat religionem." *Cic. Ep. 36. l. 12.*—"Si ullum unquam animal consecrandum fuit, illud profecto fuit. Si Cadmi aut Amphytrionis progenies, aut Tyndari in cælum tollenda fama fuit, huic idem honos certe dicendus est, quod quidem faciam, teque omnium optimam. doctissimamque approbantibus diis immortalibus ipsis in eorum cætu locatam ad opinionem omnium mortalium consecrabo." *Cicer. in Lact. div. Inst. l. 1. c. 15. See Bayle's Crit. Dict.*

not only kept his *natalitia*, or the anniversary of his birth, but wore the figure of his head about them, on gems in their rings or seals, till their veneration was carried the length of religious worship at last: As we learn from Marinus, the disciple and successor of Proclus at Athens, in the life which he wrote of his master*.

Thus the abominable system of heroic or demon-worship, in the Pagan world, appears to have arisen from an indirect method of honouring the memory, and commemorating the virtues of the dead. It was at first no doubt managed more modestly, and might have the aspect of nothing more than civil respect, or decent funeral obsequies. The Egyptian rites of sepulture, it is probable, contributed greatly to establish it. With them the merits of a person's life was solemnly tried before he received interment, his good actions rehearsed, and panegyrical orations pronounced, if he was found to deserve them. Their manner of embalming and depositing their dead, preserved their memory more fresh, and gave surviving friends opportunity of seeing and visiting them †. When pillars or tombs were erected

* Marinus, relating the happy presages of Proclus' succeeding in the Platonic school, says, that "as he arrived at the Piræum Nicolas, who afterwards grew famous in the art of declamation, but studied then under the Professors at Athens, went down to the port as to one of his acquaintance, to receive and lodge him as his countryman; for Nicolas was likewise a Lycian, and so he conducted him into the city. But Proclus, finding himself weary after his voyage, sat down by the way in the chapel of Socrates, when as yet he neither knew nor had heard that Socrates was honoured in any place thereabouts, and prayed Nicolas that he would himself sit down a little, and, if he could, any where, to help him to some water. The other obeying him, ordered some to be brought immediately, and that from no other place, but from that same consecrated ground: for the fountain of Socrates's statue was not far from thence. Now, as he was drinking, Nicolas, who thought of it only just then, said to him, this is a good omen, that you have sat in the temple of Socrates, and that there you drank the first Attic water. Then Proclus rising up, καὶ προσκυνας, and worshipping, proceeded on his way to the city." *Mar. Vit. Procli. cap. 10.*

† "What began in the simplicity of a few artless funeral ceremonies, and more obvious tokens of concern for the loss of a late departed benefactor, was, in a succession of time and politics, wrought up into all the gainful intricacies, and elaborated horrors of a periodical and more solemnly religious mystery.

"Historians are, I think, universally agreed, that the Egyptians were the first of mankind who were known to have been acquainted both with the names and histories of the chief hero-gods of Paganism." (*Diod. Sic. l. 1.*) They are said to "have been the original authors of a public divine worship: to have instituted from the earliest memory amongst themselves the practice of stated meetings, processions and solemnities of a religious kind;

erected to them; they began to be piously visited, and became the places of worship and sacrifice; and after deification

“ kind; and to have given the example of such periodical observances, and
 “ more pompous and more splendid superstitions to most other parts of the
 “ Pagan world. From a careful attention to what they are reported to have
 “ practised in the worship of their two principal hero deities Osiris and Isis,
 “ we may form a kind of theory or general idea in our minds of the quality of
 “ hero-worship at large. Antiquity informs us, that some of the most celebrated
 “ instances of heroic superstition in different ages and countries, were but
 “ the adopted rites of the two divinities just mentioned: an evidence, that
 “ they were at least the same in kind, if not strictly such in substance.
 “ All of them, (what I believe, we might venture to assert of every instance
 “ of heroic worship without reserve,) founded in the same general reasons
 “ and principles, and partaking, upon the whole, of one common purpose,
 “ design and sentiment. The character which antiquity has preserved to
 “ us of the Egyptian Osiris and Isis, is, that they were a very early king and
 “ queen of Egypt, whose reign was one continued series of public benefac-
 “ tions and services both to their kingdom and neighbourhood. Or, what
 “ is more probably, the more literal truth of their case, they were two very
 “ active, benevolent, and public spirited persons at the head of a colony in
 “ Egypt, at the time of its first peopling, who taught many useful inventions
 “ and accommodations of life, &c. The loss of a person so valuable to
 “ Egypt as Osiris, raised a public concern among the Egyptians, with a sui-
 “ table resentment against the instruments of his death. As the best testimo-
 “ ny of their respect the Egyptians could now offer him, he had funeral ho-
 “ nours decreed him by the common voice of his people; which were per-
 “ formed with all the demonstrations of natural unfeigned mourning. In
 “ the celebration whereof, the transports of public reverence and affection
 “ to his memory ran so high, that the ceremony of his obsequies was con-
 “ cluded in that of his apotheosis.—The Egyptians persuaded themselves
 “ upon this occasion, that Osiris might yet have it in his power to be propi-
 “ tious to his late-loved country, in some secret way of communication with
 “ it. They accordingly converted, as we may say, his *sepulchre* into his
 “ *altar*. And having made him the offering there of their most affectionate
 “ acknowledgements for his past services, intreated of him the continuance
 “ of his favour towards them in such future instances of his assistance as the
 “ interests of Egypt might require. And, as a farther engagement upon
 “ him to this purpose, they agreed to meet annually at this tomb, at each
 “ periodical return of the season of his interment; and to perform the like
 “ public lamentations; as upon the present occasion, to his injured manes;
 “ renewing at the same time upon their minds by certain expressive cere-
 “ monies, the memory both of his sufferings and benefactions, and recog-
 “ nizing him for their patron or tutelar demon by more solemn and expli-
 “ cit acts of natural worship. Isis lived some time after the decease of Osi-
 “ ris; and continuing to endear herself all along to the Egyptians, by a se-
 “ ries of repeated kindnesses towards them, was, upon her death, admitted to
 “ a participation with him in his divine honours. And from henceforth the
 “ annual celebration of the funeral rites of these two deified heroes became
 “ a standing solemnity of the Egyptian religion. This was the true meaning
 “ and origin of that gloomy and dismal air which some of the chief religious
 “ ceremonies of Egypt carried with them; and of the Egyptians performing
 “ many things in honour of their gods, resembling the common practice of
 “ a funeral.” *Hist. of False Relig. Convers. IV. p. 267, &c.*

“ Egypt.

tion was established, they became asylums, sacred and inviolable, where criminals themselves were privileged from punishment. Even the customary funeral rites among these ancient nations favoured strongly of this superstition, and were mixed and succeeded with several acts of religious homage, as appears from their lustrations and libations, their manner of appeasing and invoking the *Manes*, their keeping the *Novemdialia*, *Denicalia*, and anniversary days in which sacrifices were offered *. And when the form of Apotheosis was introduced, it was performed as a more solemn funeral, and at the instant the body was consumed to ashes on the pile, an eagle was let fly to heaven, transporting the soul of the hero thither, to be placed among the stars.

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"Egypti incolæ in adytis habent idolum Osiridis sepultum, hoc annuis luctibus plangunt." Jul. Firmic. *de Error. prof. rel.* c. 2.

"Didicimus exordium dæmonis, imo hominis in dæmonem consecrati: omnia enim idola ex mortuorum errore creverunt." Hieron. *in Is.*

* In the Roman funerals of noted persons, beds filled with waxen images of the ancestors of the deceased, together with other statues and emblems, were carried in the funeral procession. Augustus ordered six hundred beds of images to be carried before at the funeral of Marcellus; and Sylla was accompanied with no less than 6,000. Sometimes the nearest relations, or some public speaker ascended the rostrum, and made an oration in praise of the deceased.—When the pile was kindled, the winds were addressed to assist the flames;—the bodies of beasts, and sometimes of men, were thrown on the pile as a sacrifice to the manes. At the conclusion, the deceased was thrice addressed with a *vale*, and the prayer *sit tibi terra levis*; and the company dismissed with an aspersion of holy water.

Spargens rore levi et ramo felicis olive,

Lustravitque viros, dixitque novissima verba. Virg. *Æn.* 6.

After the funerals, feasts were instituted in honour of the dead, some of them public, and some of them private. At the end of nine or ten days, or at the end of the month, they assembled to feast or perform sacrifices for the deceased. They adorned the tombs with flowers and garlands, and made libations of wine, milk, and the blood of victims. Those sacrifices were called *Inferiæ*. The feasts called *Parentalia*, were also kept at their tombs, and repasts were prepared both for the dead and the living; the former consisting of beans, salt, bread, eggs, and the flesh of victims, with other things, part of which was burnt on the tomb, as consecrated to the dead, and part of them left for the ghosts to feed upon. Besides, there was a particular time yearly allotted for honouring the dead, in the month of February, when the *Feralia*, or feasts of the ghosts were celebrated. On all these occasions prayers were made for, or to the dead, and sometimes gladiatorial shows, and other sports were publicly exhibited, when persons were of such rank as to afford them. The poets are full of these descriptions.

All night Achilles hails Patroclus soul,

With large libations from the flowing bowl. Pope's *Hom.* II. 23.

Animamque sepulchro

Condimus, et magna supremum voce ciemus. Virg. *Æn.* 3.

The religious regard paid to sepulchres, and the superstitious rites which began to be performed there, is by some supposed to be the first origin of temples or sacred edifices among the Pagans. It is not improbable, that these ancient and stupendous structures, the Egyptian pyramids, were a kind of monumental temples. Certain customs used in mourning and honouring the dead were prohibited in the divine laws to the Jews; the sacrifices of the Gentiles are styled *the sacrifices of the dead*; and their temples, in which they did partake of them, were the temples and tables of demons *. Idolaters are represented in Isaiah as sacrificing in gardens, and remaining among the graves, and lodging in the monuments †. The fathers were wont to speak of the Pagan temples as no other than sepulchres ‡. Prudentius represents them in the same light :

*Et tot templa Deum Romæ quot in urbe sepulchra
Heroum, numerare licet.* Lib. 1.

As they supposed the pillars and images after their consecration were inhabited, and in some sort animated by the demons : So they supposed the like presence and power at the coffins and tombs where their relics were deposited. On this account, Plato, in a passage already quoted, would have the shrines and coffins of the valiant worshipped as the coffins of demons. And as superstition assumed the appearance of greater pomp and wealth, temples were provided for them where they lay enshrined, priests and revenues settled, costly gifts offered, sacred assemblies held: prayers, hymns, processions, prostrations, sacrifices, in general, all external acts of worship usually rendered to the Deity, and whatever superstition could devise were there performed.

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* 1 Cor. x.

† Isa. lxx. 3, 4.

‡ " Fuit usque adeo sepulchrorum veteribus cura, ut non aliunde templorum et sacrarum ædium, originem deductam diligentissimi Scriptores tradent, Eusebius et Lactantius." Girald. *Sepulchr.*" Quid quod multa ex his templa, quæ tholis sunt aureis et sublimibus elata fastigiis auctorum conscriptionibus comprobatur contegere cineres, atque ossa et functorum esse, corporum sepulturas? Nonne patet et promptum est, aut pro diis immortalibus mortuos colere aut inexpiabilem fieri numinibus contumeliam, quorum delubra et templa mortuorum superlata sunt bustis." Arnob. *Adv. Gent.* l. 6.Clemens Alexand. also says, What they called by the specious name of temples, were but sepulchres. The temple of Minerva in the city of Larissa, he says, was the tomb of Acrisius; Cecrops was buried in the most stately temple at Athens; and Erichonius in the temple of Poliade. The capitol of Rome was the tomb of Tulus or some body else; according to Arnobius. Clem. *Protrept.*

The genius of modern Paganism is not much different from the old in this respect. The greater part of their idols appear to be some fabulous benefactors or heroes whom they have deified; and many of their festivals and sacrifices are in honour of the dead. In Japan the sect called *Xenxi* pays adoration to the memory of such great men as have been honoured for their heroic actions, though they deride, it is said, a future state of rewards and punishments. Those of the sect of *Xedorius* give this account of their founder; that he was a prince of the blood royal, whose wife dying, he lamented for her in the most pathetic manner, and afterwards ranked her among his idols, commanding all his disciples to pay her divine honours. *Budso* among the same people, who taught certain precepts in religion and morality, is one of their most celebrated deities; and his two disciples, who collected his wise sentences, are also worshipped along with their master, in all his temples, one being placed on his right hand, and the other on his left. *Ingen*, one of their saints, much adored, they say, was a native of China, who travelled into Japan, to make himself acquainted with all their religious mysteries. There being at that time a violent drought, the people applied to him for rain, which he prayed for, in so earnest a manner, that a flood ensued, which carried away all their bridges. They observe a festival in memory of him every summer, when they offer sacrifices on the top of a high mountain, where he stood when he repeated the prayer; and they think, if one of their priests ascend the same hill every year, they will have plenty of rain. *Toranga*, another of their idols, was formerly a husbandman, and took possession of the empire, soon after its first establishment, and by his extraordinary merits was ranked among the gods. He delivered Japan from a tyrant, who with eight other kings laid the country waste, so that he is always represented with eight arms, and with a warlike instrument in each hand. The *Fo-be* of the Chinese, they tell us, was the son of a king, who as soon as he was born stood upright, and walked seven paces, pointing with one hand to heaven, and another to earth, saying, "There is none in heaven, or on earth, that ought to be adored besides myself." Of his doctrines, miracles and death they give ample account. After his death, it was pretended, that he had been born 8000 times. Their god *Quante-Cong* is adored as their first prince and lawgiver, who civilized the people. And *Phelo*, because

because he first discovered the making of salt, who fled away in anger, because his merits met not with a sufficient recompense. They have a festival in honour of his memory, in the beginning of June, when they adorn their houses with green boughs, and sail out in vessels singing hymns, and calling aloud for their beloved Phelo. The religious worship paid to the memory of their celebrated philosopher *Confucius* is well known.

The Tonquinese have not only grand festivals on the 1st and 15th of every month, but several other holidays in memory of the dead. The inhabitants of Madagascar, when they celebrate their feasts and fasts, employ themselves from morn to night, in rehearsing and singing the heroic achievements of their ancestors. Those of Agag and Tockocka keep the first day of every month as a holiday; and the most part of their festivals are in memory of their deceased and dearest relations, to whose souls they offer up prayers, and venerate them as a sort of deities. The Tartars pay a most solemn respect to their dead; children bewail their parents for several days successively, and not only inter them with funeral pomp, but pay their annual respects to their tombs, accompanied with tears and loud lamentations. Some of their tribes hang them up, and when their skeletons are perfectly dry, adorn them with coral, and pieces of painted glass. Afterwards they carry them in solemn procession round their houses, and honour them as idols. The Gaures, besides other festivals, particularly fix anniversaries in commemoration of the six days work of creation, each of which lasts five days, commemorate their dead once every month throughout the year, and on such occasions provide entertainments in memory of their deceased friends. This monthly feast is instituted and kept up by express order of the *Sadder*, which is their liturgy, to this effect, "Remember the souls of your departed fathers and mothers." In Lapland, and most other Pagan nations, like practices prevail. When Mahomet established his religion, to render it more engaging to the people, he appointed a number of festivals. Among others, his followers celebrate one yearly in memory of the martyrdom of the children of Ali: On which some of the people carry their devotion so far, as to daub themselves all over with blood, in memory of their slaughter; others black their faces, and roll out their tongues, with convulsive motions of the body, because these heroes or prophets suffered so
much

much by drought, that they became black, and their tongues came out of their mouths. Some bury themselves in a rock, having their heads covered with an earthen pot. Others appear with drums beating and colours flying: or hearses bearing the images of the deceased, while people jump, dance, sing or cry around them. A panegyric harangue in honour of the two brothers, generally two hours long, makes part of the ceremony. The religious honours which the false prophet receives at his tomb in Mecca, are sufficiently known.

C H A P. VIII.

Demon-worship revived among Christians in the Worship of Saints.—This began in Honours paid to the Martyrs, and Anniversary Festivals at their Tombs.—Pagan Rites and Customs adopted.—Gradual Progress and excessive Growth of Superstition.—The Veneration for the Virgin Mary, the Saints, and Relics in later Times.

WHEN the absurdity and gross idolatry of the system of demon-worship is considered, it might have been expected, that neither that, nor any thing of the same nature, should ever have found a place among Christians. The light and power of the glorious Gospel was soon successful to bring it into discredit, and to put the demons of the nations to flight, after they had long reigned, and fed on the blood and fat of their sacrifices. And indeed for a time, nothing could exceed the horror and abhorrence which all Christians shewed for the temples of the idols, and every thing relating to their worship. Their very names they would not take into their lips; a censor or a grain of incense they would not touch, although it should have preserved them from the lions or the fire. The festivals and sports consecrated to their memory, they would not countenance in any manner; nor so much as wear a garland, or carry a bough, if it was considered in this light*. And it must

* Tertullian in his treatise against idolatry, teaches, " that God not only forbids men to adore images, but even to make them, that therefore it was not lawful for Christians to be makers of what Pagans adore, not even

must be confessed, that none have wrote more copiously or vehemently against the Gentile idolatry in all its shapes, or exposed it with greater eloquence, than the earlier writers of the Christian Church. But soon, alas! did the same mystery of iniquity begin to work in another form. They were not duly aware of the artifices and subtilty of that arch-demon Satan, who from the beginning had deceived the world. Transformed into angels of light and saints in glory, these demons soon regained their place and dignity, from which they had been degraded in the character of heathen gods and heroes: and their new empire for a long time was as flourishing, and the honours rendered to them as extravagant as they ever had been before. Not a few suppose that the Spirit of God spake expressly of this new species of idolatry, which should prevail among Christians, when he foretold, that "men should depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils;"—intimating, that the old doctrines and practices of demon-worship should be revived in the superstitious veneration that should be paid to angels and the souls of departed saints, and even to their images, shrines and relics. This was in almost

"even under pretence of getting their living: that all of them ought to take care that no work go out of their hands, which they know to be intended for the idols; that they ought not to deal either in incense or public sacrifices, or else how will they dare to pass by a temple, and blow and spit against the smoking altars:—That they ought by no means to be partakers in the festivals and public days of rejoicing of the Pagans;—much less to celebrate them among themselves;" As there were then some who observed the Saturnalia, played, and made feasts in the months of December and January, and sent each other gifts which he blames as so many Pagan superstitions; as they were called new-years gifts, that name was for a long time rejected by the Christians. He also blames those who place lamps and laurel-garlands at their doors in the middle of the day, on public times of rejoicing, and looks on this custom as a sort of worship paid to the inferior deities." "If I am invited," says he, "to the consecration of a priest or a sacrifice, I would not go; I would be partaker of it neither by my advice, nor money, nor attendance. If any one but provides wine for the libation, or contributes one word towards the ceremony, he will be esteemed the minister of idolatry."

A soldier having refused to appear on a certain occasion, like his fellows wearing a crown of laurel, he was degraded and cast into prison. Some blamed him for his singularity, as the peace of the Christians was hereby endangered. Tertullian considered this crown not as an ornament indifferent, but as a mark of idolatry, and therefore undertook to defend the soldier in a tract wrote expressly for that purpose. On the same ground, he allows not Christians to take off their cloaks before stones, or sit after prayer after the custom of the Pagans; "Propterea in nobis reprehendi meretur quod apud idolas celebratur:" How careful and resolute the primitive confessors were in avoiding every act by which they might be supposed to consent to idolatry, the history of those times bear witness.

almost all respects so similar to the old idolatry, that a detail of the history of the one, may serve equally well *mutatis mutandis* for that of the other. It was as like it as any copy could be to the original. In their principle, specious reasons, gradual progression, as well as in their external forms and ceremonies, they were exactly alike. Both of them arose from a desire of honouring the memory of the worthy, and acknowledging and commemorating the signal benefits enjoyed by them, or derived from their example.

It is undoubtedly a doctrine of revelation, that the righteous should be had in everlasting remembrance; that men should "be followers of them who through faith and patience have inherited the promises;" behold with respect the "great cloud of witnesses," and imitate the examples of the elders, who "obtained a good report." Our Lord declares, with respect to the pious act of a certain woman, that "wherever the gospel of the kingdom should be preached "in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman "hath done, be told for a memorial of her*:" And his Apostles enjoin it as a duty, to remember them that had spoken to Christians in the name of the Lord, whose faith they ought to follow. But of these various methods of commemorating and honouring them in vogue in latter times, there is not one syllable in Old or New Testament Scriptures. It never came into the mind of any of the inspired writers, while recommending such duties, to command men to build their tombs and garnish their sepulchres; much less to dedicate churches and altars, and festivals, and fraternities to their honour; or to convene together in solemn assemblies annually, to read over their lives and acts; to make yearly orations in their praise, to sing hymns, say prayers, make confessions, and receive the holy mysteries

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* Matth. xii. 13. So, Luke i. 48. "From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." "Si non aliud medium beatam prædicandi Mariam, quam celebrando festum aliquod Domine nostræ ut loquuntur, tum frustrata erat effectum et eventum prophetia ejus per multas annorum centurias: nam ait, *ab hoc tempore* prædicabunt, cum non nisi post multas annorum centurias instituta fuerint festa Mariæ aut Magdalene, et tamen ubique prædicatum evangelium, et statim ac cæpit prædicari, conservabatur memoria felicitatis Mariæ, et illius quod feceret Magdalena. Videmus quomodo rerum gestarum a Christo memoria conservanda sit. Non modo spiritus sancti ammannuenses literis consignarunt ea quæ fecit et docuit Christus, sed etiam per orbem terrarum viva voce promulgarunt. Hic prætextus recolendi memoriam mysteriorum redemptionis aut beneficiorum Christi æditum patefacit superstitioni et idolatriæ." Calderw. *Alt. Damasc.*

in places where their bones lie interred, or in houses called by their name: much less still to do all these as services directed and due to them. Yet all this, and much more, hath been done under this pretence. Though there were a great variety of particular rites, and some festivals, enjoined in the Jewish canon, yet not so much as one of these was consecrated in honour of any mortal. No day to be kept holy to Noah, to Abraham, to Jacob: No tabernacle to be built, nor festival celebrated for Moses or Elias, or Joshua, or the Judges, or the Prophets. Nor yet, when all things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven, and the edification of the saints were delivered by Jesus and his Apostles, did they mention any thing like these, as belonging to the duty of commemorating those whom they declare should be remembered. If this had been their meaning, their rules had surely been defective, while neither the particular persons were specified, nor the number nor names of the days fixed, nor the peculiar modes and rites of service. So the zealots of that devotion have ever been at an unspeakable loss on all these heads, and varied exceedingly at different times, and in different places,—not knowing when to begin their catalogue of saints, and when to finish it; whom to honour, and whom to leave unhonoured; or when, or how to render their respects in a manner distinct and peculiar. The whims and fancies of private persons, or the demagogues of particular districts for a long time directed all these important matters. Saints were taken in, or kept out of the public kalendar, as they happened to be liked; till an infallible judge, with his consistory, was constituted with unlimited authority, like “a potter who hath power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another to dishonour,” to canonize whom he pleased, not according to the merits of the candidates, but according as they might conduce to establish the influence, or promote the views of his court and clergy. On his sovereign mandate the Antichristian *apothecosis*, in the last times, hath depended *. It is this determines their names,

* For some ages, persons were sainted by common consent, rather than by any public and solemn form: hence, it sometimes happened, that some were acknowledged for such in one place, were rejected in another; while some churches blessed them; others execrated them; instances of which occur in the divisions occasioned by Arianism. After Rome claimed the supremacy in other things, her Pontiffs also appropriated this right to themselves. This law was enacted by Alexander III. “that none could lawfully be worshipped as a saint, without

names, their numbers, their virtues and miracles, their rank and precedence, the chief seat of their dignity, and the extent of their patronage and government. In this way only we can account for the seeming inequality of some eminent and undoubted saints being excluded from these holiday honours *; while some of inferior or doubtful sanctity, or fools or villains; or perhaps beings that never existed, enjoy them †: While some have grand, others must be

"without licence from the Pope." The first instance, according to some, of a solemn canonization, was that of Sigbert by Leo III. at the beginning of the 9th century; according to others, it was Ulric in 993, by Pope John, or that of Bernard, by Alexander III. In order that their good works and miracles may have due time to ripen into a marvellous tale, none are to enjoy this honour till 50 years after his decease, though they may be allowed the privilege of beatification, and be honoured in a more private manner. The different proceedings in this pompous farce are too tedious to mention. The privileges consequent upon are,—to have their names enrolled in the catalogue of saints, to be acknowledged by all;—to have churches and altars in certain places dedicated to their memory;—to be invoked publicly in the prayers of the Church;—to have an office appointed for them, in which sacrifices are offered to them, including all exterior parts of worship given to God;—they are painted with rays of light around their heads;—their relics, which are put into precious shrines, are placed on the altars or beneath them, are also honoured, even to their hair or clothes:—In fine, anniversary holidays are appointed to be solemnized on their birth-days, either by all Catholics, or in the cities, provinces and nations whose protectors they become. In this too, they imitate their Pagan predecessors. When Julius Cæsar was deified, Augustus appointed holy games and shows to be celebrated in commemoration of his victories. A man's holiness alone will never procure him this honour, unless they happen, on some account or other, to be favourites at court, or have powerful friends to solicit it, and pay a good round sum, 2,000 crowns at least. When Edward I. applied to Rome in behalf of Robert Grossthead, Bishop of Lincoln, he could not prevail, because the good man had been a little too free in exposing the corruptions of the Church and clergy in his time. But when the same Prince supplicated earnestly for Thomas de Cantelupe, that he might be made "their advocate in heaven, to procure to him and his people, grace at present, and glory hereafter," he was more successful, and how could it have been otherwise, seeing, as the Monk of Westminster assures us, he had performed 163 miracles.

* "What Tertullian said of the Pagan worship, may be equally applicable here. Is it not true, that among you some worship certain gods, which others do not? You cannot deny, but you do injuries to the gods whom you pay no honour to. The preference you give to the one, naturally produces a contempt to the other, for when, of two things you chuse the one, it is most certain that which you do not chuse, you reject: Thus, you despise those gods you own not, and shew you do not fear offending them, when you refuse them the worship wherewith you honour the other divinities." *Apol. c. 13.*

† The 27th of June is sacred to the memory of the seven sleepers, who are reported to have been seven brethren, who retired into a cave in the reign

be content with lesser festivals: Some have both a day and a night appointed for chanting their praises; others a feast without a vigil; and others, perhaps as good as they, must divide a day with some of their partners.

The seeds of this pernicious evil began to bud as early as the second century, while the faithful were under persecution. They were neither prophets nor apostles, nor any whose names are in the Scripture, who had first the honour of anniversary commemorations. They were the martyrs of these times, whom their surviving brethren endeavoured, in this manner, to vindicate from the disgrace which their barbarous enemies wished to inflict upon them. They carefully sought out their mangled remains wherever they could find them, and to express their hopes of a resurrection, honourably interred them; and not only this, but to animate others with courage to sustain the same conflict for the faith, they thought it proper to bestow some peculiar tokens of posthumous respect on such as had gained the

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crown

reign of Decius, and took a nap there until the reign of Theodosius, (only the space of 362 years) and when they awaked, they looked as fresh as a rose.

On the 21st of October, prayers are offered up to Ursula, and 11,000 virgins, that through their merits and prayers, their worshippers may obtain eternal felicity. Who can believe that Cornwall in England should have furnished such a regiment of virgins; or that they should have taken a ramble all together to Rome without business, and whence returning, they were put to the sword at Colen, with Pope Cyriacus, (another fictitious saint) in their company.—It is justly questioned, whether there was ever such a person a Christian as Longinus, to whom a festival is dedicated. St George, though the chevalier and bulwark of England, is also another very suspicious personage, unless he be the Arian Bishop of Cappadocia. Their St Christopher is rather too gigantic for ordinary faith, being, according to the most moderate computation twelve feet high; Jacobus de Voragine makes the measure twelve cubits, which makes him longer by one half, i. e. eighteen feet high, though he would require it all, if, indeed, he waded through an arm of the sea, carrying Christ on his back; he made 48,000 converts to Christianity. The characters of their Francis, their Dominic, their Loyola, their Rosa, with the English Becket, Anselm, Edmond, to whom may be added many others, shew that they have not been always very nice in their choice. The children of Bethlehem can hardly be classed among Christian saints at least. The Rhemists on the New Testament, confess that heathen children as well as Jewish, might be among them: yet, in the collect for the day, as still used in the Church of England, they are styled Martyrs. According to Mr Addison, the corruption of the word *Soracte*, the name of a mountain near Rome, hath supplied them with a saint, called *St Oreste*. The catacombs of Rome have furnished them with a multitude of others, that probably were never baptized, as *Julia Evodia*. The English saint *Amphybolus*, said to have been the fellow-martyr of St Alban, according to Bishop Usher, was nothing more than the shaggy cloak which Alban wore. Other instances might be produced in their St Veronica, St Ovid, &c. but these may suffice.

crown of martyrdom. With this view, they annually convened at their tombs, made their cemeteries their churches, where they watched, feasted, and performed divine worship. They began to keep registers of their names, and records of their lives and sufferings, which were read in their assemblies, on the anniversaries of their death, which they called *Natalitia*, either because they esteemed the day of their martyrdom to be a most joyful event, as being their birth to a happy life for ever; or because the birth-days of princes and other festivals were usually so called. After the death of Polycarp, about 168, the church of Smyrna, in their epistle to another church, tell them, "That they intended, if God would permit, to meet at his tomb, and celebrate his birth-day with joy and gladness, as well for the memory of the sufferer, as for example to posterity *." "We offer," says Tertullian, "oblations for those that are dead, for their nativities on their anniversary day †." And Cyprian orders his clergy to note down the days of their decease, that a commemoration of them might be celebrated among the memories of the martyrs: And says, they offered sacrifices for them as often as they celebrated their passions, or days of martyrdom by an anniversary commemoration ‡. These sacrifices were prayer and thanksgiving to God for the examples of the martyrs, the celebration of the Eucharist, with oblations for the poor, together with a panegyric sermon, and reading the acts of the martyr, if they had any such recorded §. Being esteemed high festivals, the same service was performed on them as on the Sabbath and Lord's day, and the

* Euseb. *lib. 4. cap. 15.*

† "Oblationes pro defunctis, pro Natalitiis annua die facimus." Tertull. *de Coron. Milit. c. 3.*

‡ "Denique et dies eorum quibus excedunt annotare, ut commemorationes eorum inter memorias martyrum celebrare possimus.—Sacrificia pro iis semper, ut meministis, offerimus, quoties martyrum passiones et dies anniversaria commemoratione celebramus." Cypr. *Ep. 12. & 39.*

§ The third Council of Carthage, by a canon, authorised the reading of these apocryphal lessons. "Liceat etiam legi passiones martyrum, cum anniversarii dies eorum celebrantur." The like custom was followed in the French churches. Mabill. *de Cursu Gall. p. 403.* Only they were forbidden in the Roman church by the decree of Pope Gelasius, as having "been written by anonymous authors, sometimes by ignorant heathens, or by heretics, as the passions of Cyricus, Julitta and St George." "*Singulari cautela, secundum antiquam consuetudinem in sancta Romana ecclesia non leguntur,*" &c. *Gelas. Decr.* But she did not always continue equally wise and cautious.

the same vigils also preceded them *. As they soon became numerous, and grew into repute, they were not long unaccompanied with great abuses. In Eusebius's time, as was noticed before, those saints to be commemorated already amounted to an immense multitude; so that they bade fair to equal in a little the number of the gods of Hesiod and Varro. In the time of Chrysostome and Theodoret, it was not once, or twice, or five times in a year, that they celebrated their memorials, but they had often one or two in the same week, which occasioned frequent solemnities †.

Before the empire became Christian, many philosophic tenets, chiefly drawn from the system of Plato, as adopted and taught by the Ecclectics at Alexandria, among which his doctrines concerning demons and human souls had already infected the minds of certain Christian doctors. These mingling with the mistaken piety of the superstitious populace, contributed greatly to advance this and other superstitions relating to the dead. They began to make their boast of having something in the Christian religion that so exactly corresponded with, and exemplified his doctrine. Eusebius, after mentioning a passage before quoted, from that philosopher, relating to the honours due to the souls and sepulchres of those who fall valiantly in battle, adds, "These things are fitting and becoming upon the decease of the favourites of God, whom, if thou shalt affirm to be the reputed champions of true religion, thou shalt not say amiss; whence it is our custom to go unto their tombs, and to make our prayers at them, and to honour their blessed souls ‡." They began to consider such instances of resemblance and conformity between Paganism and Christianity as new-modelled, as a kind of preparation for receiving the latter, and they held it out as a bait to allure the unconverted unto it. Theodoret wrote in a similar strain, in his treatise *de curandis Græcorum affectionibus* §.

This

* "Conveneramus ad sancti Iusti sepulchrum, processio fuit antelucana, solemnitas anniversaria, populus ingens segu ex utroque quem capacissima basilica non caperet, et quamlibet cincta diffusis cryptoporticibus. Cultu peracto vigiliarum, quas alternante mulcedine monachi clericique Psalmicines concelebraverint, quisque in diversa secessimus, non procul tamen," &c. Sidon. Apollin. *lib. 5. ep. 17.*

† Theodor. *Serm. 8. de Mort.* Chrysost. *Hom. 65. de Mart.*

‡ Euseb. *Præpar. Evang. lib. 13.*

§ "Quid ita quæso boni viri (Græci) quæ ipsi facimus, accusatis? Nos etenim pari modo eos qui illustri pietate viguerunt pro quo ea jugulati ac
" cæli

This method of curing the prejudices of the Heathens, and of accommodating the Christian religion to their taste, by dressing it up in a Pagan garb, was greatly followed after the civil establishment of Christianity *. The people had been too long accustomed to a sensible and pompous kind of worship, and the ancient errors of polytheism, to be easily brought to confine their minds to one invisible Being, or to be satisfied with a worship simple and spiritual.—Shews, festivals, and splendid ceremonies had taken too fast hold of their imaginations, and they longed still for something of the same kind. The Ecclesiastical rulers, unhappily adopted their ideas, and thought it good policy, and not inconsistent with piety, to gratify them †. It was certain

“ cæsi sunt, et auxiliares et medicos nominamus; at non demones tamen; ablit a nobis, ablit hic furor: sed amicos dei fidelesque servos dicimus fuisse.—Suos mortuos Dominus Deus noster in templa pro diis vestris demonibus iri duxit, ac illos quidem cassos gloria vanosque reddidit, suis autem martyribus honorem illorum dedit.” *Lib. 8.*

This Bishop, who is said to have converted and baptized above 10,000 Marcionites, besides a number of Arians, till not one heretic was left in his diocese, though often pursued with stones, and in danger of death, acknowledges that he was very much assisted in these conversions by the prayers of James the hermit, whose life he has written, and of the saints whose relics he had preserved. Fleury, *Eccles. Hist. B. 27. § 30.*

* *Eusebius*, in his life of Constantine, says, this Emperor, “ to make the Christian religion more plausible to the Gentiles, adopted into it the exterior ornaments which they used in their religion.”

† “ Gentiles recens Christi fidem amplexos non confestim ad perfectam religionis Christianæ normam adduci potuisse crediderunt, qui tum erant populi Christiani pastores itaque aliqua indulgentia initio usi sunt, ut inveteratam illam superstitionem paulatim ex eorum mentibus extirparent.” *Filesc. Theol. Par. l. i. Select. cap. 6.* This is aptly described by Nyssen, in his life of Gregory the wonder worker; “ Omnibus ubique populis magnam fecit accessionem in deum studii ac pietatis, fanciens ac statuens ut nomine illorum, qui pro fide decertassent, dies festi ac celebres conventus celebrarentur. Cumque alius in alium locum corpora martyrum diduxissent, per anniversarium annui circuli ambitum congregati exultabant, in honorem martyrum diem festum celebrantes. Et enim etiam hoc nimium magnæ. Sapientiæ ejus documentum est, quod cum omne simul hominum genus ad novum vitæ institutum transformaret, et tanquam auriga quidam naturam regens, et fidei ac dei agnitionis frænâs eos firmiter subjugans, indulgebat, ut paululum quiddam sub iugo fidei lætitia exultarent subditi. Cum enim animadvertisset, quod ob corporeas delectationes ac voluptates simplex et imperitum vulgus in simulacrorum cultus errore permaneret; ut interim in eo, quod est præcipuum, nempe in deum, se recte gererent; pro manibus illis superstitionis ritibus, permisit eis, ut in memoriam ac recordationem sanctorum martyrum sese oblectarent, et in lætitiâ, effunderentur, quod successu temporis aliquando futurum esset, ut sua sponte ad honestiorem et accuratiorem vitæ rationem transirent, præsertim cum etiam fides eos ad illam rem deduceret.” *Nyssen, Vit. Greg. Neo-Cæsar, p. 311, &c. Edit. Vossii.*

tain names they were offended with, and the names of things were changed, rather than the things themselves. The ancient demons must decamp, or else submit to be baptised in the name of Peter and of Paul, &c. and immediately they became good tutelary saints, guardians, fortresses, bulwarks*, advocates, physicians, and salvation-carriers; and hereupon had all their temples, ceremonies, sacrifices and pompous festivals restored to them. This adoption of the ancient Pagan system into the Antichristian, especially as to the worship of saints, and what relates to it, has been all along too visible, to be denied either by earlier or later writers, of whatever persuasion. Volumes have been written to evince it. Many gloried in it as a notable triumph, but their glorying was not good. "For the feasts of Jove and Bacchus," says the author lately mentioned, "the solemn festivals of Peter, Paul, Thomas, Sergius, and other holy martyrs, are celebrated with a popular banquet: Therefore since such great advantage arises from the honour conferred on the martyrs, fly, I beseech you, O men! the error of demons, and making use of the previous guidance and torches of the martyrs, take the way which leads to God †." Gregory I. called *the Great*, the inventor of the Ecclesiastical Service, gave his missionary whom he sent into England, the following instructions: "You must not destroy the idol-temples, but the idols. Let holy water be made. Let the temples be sprinkled; let altars be built, and relics deposited in them. If their temples are well built, let
" them

* By such names were the saints and their relics frequently called; Basil, in his oration upon the 40 martyrs, says, "these are they which have taken possession of our country, as certain conjoined towers, to secure it from the incursions of enemies."—The same, prays God "to keep them safe from hurt, and to preserve steadfast the Church of Cæsarea, being guarded with a mighty tower of martyrs."—Chrysostome, speaking of the relics of St Peter and St Paul, declared, "that these fortified the city of Rome more strongly than any tower, or 10,000 ramparts." *Hom. 32. in Rom.* The like he affirms of the Egyptian martyrs, who were "a stronger defence to the city of Antioch, than an impregnable wall of adamant, repelling on every side not only the assaults of visible enemies, but also defeating the ambuscades of invisible fiends, and all the stratagems of the devil." *Hom. 70. ad Pop. Antioch.* These good people of Antioch offered up a supplication to the Emperor Leo about the year 460, for the keeping of the corps of holy Simeon the Stylite, "that it might be to them a wall and a fortress, because" say they, "our city hath no wall." *Evagr. lib. 1. c. 13.* Hence, some have concluded that the *Mahuszim*, or god of forces, in Daniel, are none other than these saintly protectors and guardians. *Mede's Apost. &c.*

† Theodor. *ut supra.*

“ them be turned from the service of the devil, to that of
 “ the true God, to the intent that these heathen people
 “ may more readily come to worship in the accustomed
 “ places. To those who used to sacrifice oxen to the devil,
 “ you must, in lieu thereof, order some other solemnity,
 “ namely, that on the day of the dedication or death of
 “ holy martyrs, whose relics are there deposited, they
 “ make themselves tabernacles, with boughs, round the
 “ churches into which their temples have been converted,
 “ and there celebrate the solemnity by religious banquets;
 “ and let them no more slaughter beasts to the devil: but
 “ let them kill some for eating, and give thanks to God.
 “ Thus some exterior rejoicing must be left them, that they
 “ may the readier come into the interior *.” A certain
 librarian of the Pope thus exults, “ All things heretofore
 “ profane at Rome, are they not now become sacred?
 “ Have not all the temples of false gods been converted in-
 “ to churches of saints? Is not the Pantheon, which was
 “ formerly the temple of the idols, now the church of the
 “ Virgin Mary, and all the saints? Hath not the temple
 “ of Apollo, in the Vatican, where the bodies of the holy
 “ Apostles were buried, been converted into that of those
 “ very Apostles, and many others? That of Castor and
 “ Pollux in the Roman-market, is now the church of St
 “ Cosmo and Damien: All the profane ceremonies are
 “ now become sacred †.” Another of the same religion,
 makes

* Gregor. in *Regist. lib. 9. ep. 71.*

† Aug. Steuchus, *de donat. Constant.* This metamorphosis of the Roman temples was chiefly effected by Boniface IV. successor to Gregory, who applied them to the use of churches, after he had conveyed into them no less than twenty-eight waggons of the bones of martyrs, which he had taken out of the burying-places of the city. The temple of Juno was dedicated to St Michael; that of Hercules to St Stephen; the temple of Fortune to holy Mary the Egyptian, and that of Saturn became the church of St Adrian. But the Virgin Mary shared most largely of the spoils; no less than twelve temples became sacred to her, among which were those of Venus and Isis and Vesta, the Bona dea, Jupiter, Apollo, &c. But the most considerable of them all was that called formerly the Pantheon, dedicated to Cybele, and all the gods; but which now must bear the name of St Mary *la Rotunda*, being consecrated to the honour of Mary, and all the saints of both sexes; the feast in commemoration of this was to be called *All Saints*, and to be kept in the month of May on which the feast of Cybele had been observed. This was afterwards transferred to the first of November by Gregory IV. for the sake of provision for the multitude of the people that then flocked to Rome. Dr Middleton, in his letter from Rome, informs us that where a temple of Mars anciently stood, they have erected a church to Martina, with this inscription:

makes the following confession : “ To obviate the reproaches
 “ the Pagans cast upon the Christians, saying, that since
 “ their appearance, and the contempt of the ancient reli-
 “ gion, all calamities had come in the world,—our Chri-
 “ tians, desirous to shew them that they had the public
 “ good at heart, instead of the *Pervigilia* and *Leñifternica*,
 “ rejoiced on the eves of the anniversaries of their martyrs.
 “ In lieu of the *Februa*, *Vinalia*, *Robigalia*, *Ambarvalia*,
 “ &c. they feasted or observed the purification, made pro-
 “ cessions, rogations and litanies, in which Jesus Christ and
 “ the saints were called upon, instead of Jupiter and other
 “ false gods of the Heathens *.” It is certain that almost
 all the Pagan ritual was adopted at last; and there was
 scarce a festival, a procession, or a ceremony introduced,
 but corresponded to some others formerly in use.

In honour of Jesus or of his martyrs, all things became
 lawful, and every sort of superstition was indulged and con-
 secrated. Lamps were kept burning in the cemeteries, and
 tapers afterwards consecrated and lighted up in churches
 even in clear day, as well as carried in funeral and other
 processions. “ We see,” said Vigilantius, “ that under +
 “ pretence of religion, the custom of the Pagans, to light
 “ up a quantity of flambeaux, whilst the sun shines, has
 “ been introduced into churches. Is it to do honour to the
 “ martyrs, and the Lamb of God, that you light up to
 “ them your vile tapers?” To this Jerome replies, “ We
 “ do not light up candles whilst it is day,—but we, by this
 “ means, banish from us the darkness of the night. If any
 “ one acts otherwise, it is in honour to martyrs, to accom-
 “ modate themselves to the simplicity of the men of the
 “ age, or some bigotted women.” Augustine complains
 of certain Christians in his time, who kneeled down at the
 tombs of the martyrs; and of others who drank and pour-
 ed

*Martirii gestans virgo Martina coronam,
 Ejecto hinc Martis numine templa tenet.*

Mars hence expelled, Martina martyr'd maid,
 Claims now the worship which to him was paid.

Baronius says, “ It is allowable for the Church to transfer the pious uses
 “ those ceremonies which the Pagans employed impiously to superstitious
 “ worship after they have been purified by consecration; for the devil is the
 “ more mortified to see those things turned to the service of Jesus Christ,
 “ which were instituted for his own.” *Annal.* 36. Bellarmine, Polydore,
 Virgil, Marolles, du Choul, and innumerable other Catholics freely acknow-
 ledge, and, at the same time, vindicate this transfer.

* Fauchet, *Life of Clov.*

ed out libations at the sepulchres, after the manner of the Heathens, thinking they might lawfully inebriate themselves, provided they took off their cups in such hallowed places, in memory of the honoured dead: Upon which he says, " I cannot approve of them, yet I dare not freely reprove them, lest thereby I either offend some good men, or provoke some turbulent spirits: for it is one thing that we teach, and another that we are forced to tolerate, and constrained to bear with till it be amended *." The same father declares, that he knew many who adored sepulchres and pictures. Yet he represents Faustus the Manichean, as calumniating the Catholics, because they honoured the shrines of martyrs, charging them with having turned the idols into martyrs, whom they worshipped with like vows. The truth is, saint-worship, like hero-worship, crept in unawares, and under disguise. What was at first simple commemoration, became gradually religious veneration, invocation, adoration; at first indirect, and then direct and formal. The devotees were long engaged in it before they knew well what they did, and before they would allow it to be called by its proper name; even as that church which is most deeply guilty of it, will not, to this day, call it by the same word by which the adoration of the Supreme God is expressed, but always gave it a softening name, though in all other respects they are the same. It required some ages to complete the system, and to reconcile mens minds to such an extreme degradation of human reason, and such a corruption of Christianity as some of the grosser acts of it amounted to. For a long time, the worship of any creature was expressly disclaimed by Christians, and several superstitious practices tending to it were condemned as they arose †. Even the days that were observed, the prayers and thanksgivings that were presented, and the oblations that were offered, the temples that were dedicated, and the illuminations.

* " Approbare nonne possum, liberius improbare non audeo." Aug. *cont. Faust.* l. 20.

† " Si la multitude contraignit les évêques de dissimuler ces abus, dont ils reconnoissoient l'énormité, et dont ils s'efforcoient de retenir le torrent; d'autre côté l'église et les conciles condamnerent tous ces excès, défendirent d'allumer des flambeaux en l'honneur des martyrs, interdirent les vigiles, reprimerent ceux qui portoient des viandes sur les sepulchres, comme ayant pris cette coutume du Paganisme. Ils enseignèrent que les reliques des saints doivent être ensevelies, et non portées d'un lieu à l'autre; ils déclarèrent que la coutume de jurer par les reliques des morts étoit purement payenne, et que plusieurs batissoient des sepulchres aux martyrs sur la vanité des songes." *Hist. des Anc. Cerem.*

illuminations and processions that were made, in honour of deceased saints, were said to be in honour of God; and at first, in respect of direct address and ascription, were confined to him alone; though from the beginning, the association of the names and honour of mortals with that of God, in these religious acts, was on the matter an attempt to make them partners with him, and was virtually a departure from the great principle, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." After the martyrdom of Polycarp, when the Gentiles insisted that his body might not be delivered to the Christians, lest they should worship it, the Church of Smyrna, in that epistle which speaks of their celebrating his memory by an anniversary, disclaim solemnly any such idolatrous intention: "We cannot leave Christ, and worship another;—we adore Christ, but love the martyrs." Tertullian says, "We do not worship the statue and images of the dead, which the very mice and spiders find can perceive no thing *." Jerome scrupled not to say, he is mad that adores any martyrs, for they are not God †; and that we ought to invoke none by praying to them, but God himself ‡. Even Basil and Nazianzen, who are by some reckoned the first who brought the invocation of saints into the Church, by their rhetorical flourishes and apostrophes addressed to them in their funeral and festival celebrations, endeavour to purge themselves of creature-worship: "They that worship the creature as God," says Basil, "and not the Creator, introduce Gentilism again §." Nazianzen declares, "Whatsoever difference of honour or glory there may be, all creatures are our fellow-servants, and therefore not to be worshipped by us ||." The Synod of Laodicea forbade the invocation of angels, when it began to appear ¶. The council of Eliberis, in the time of Constantine, made the following canon: "That no tapers be light-

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" ed

* Tertull. *Apol.* c. 12.

† Hieron. *cont. Vigil.*

‡ In. *Pro.* 2.

§ Hom. 27. *Sabell. & Arr.*

|| Orat. 40.

¶ Theodoret says, "they were the Jews who persuaded men to worship angels, because the law was delivered by angels; which practice continued a long time in Phrygia and Pisidia, and therefore the synod of Laodicea doth forbid praying to angels; and, to this day, the oratories of St Michael are among them; they therefore thought it a piece of humility, since God could not be seen, nor touched nor comprehended by us, to obtain the favour of God, by the intercession of angels." Theodor. *in Col.* 2. 18.

“ ed in the day-time in burying-places: whoever fails of
 “ observing this order, shall be cut off from the commu-
 “ nion of the Church.” Eusebius says of Constantine, that
 “ he took care to adorn the world with sacred temples,—
 “ which he dedicated to one only God, the Lord of the
 “ whole universe *.” Arnobius derided the Gentiles, for
 assigning to each of their deities their respective temples,
 which they were to possess as their peculiar habitations, and
 which were called by their names: “ Of one you say, this
 “ is the temple of Juno; of the other, Apollo resides here;
 “ Hercules in that, and Summanus in the other. Is not
 “ that doing the gods high injury, to distinguish them by
 “ the name of their habitation? To assign them narrow
 “ lodges, to build them up conclaves, and cells, and to
 “ imagine that they want these dwellings like men, like
 “ cats, like ants, like lizards, and like timorous rats.”
 There was nothing like this as yet among Christians; and
 for a long time after, they would have accounted the con-
 secration and nomination of a church in honour of a saint
 or angel, to have been an act of idolatry. Bellarmine says,
 “ It is well done to consecrate houses, not only to God, but
 “ also to the saints †;” and so say our paganizing Prote-
 stants still. But let us hear Augustine, as late as the end of
 the fifth century. “ Were we not accursed by the truth
 “ of Christ, and the church of God, if we should make a
 “ temple of stone and wood, to some saint or angel, how
 “ excellent soever; because we should then pay to the
 “ creature, the service which we owe to God alone? If
 “ then we should be sacrilegious, by building temples in
 “ honour of any creature whatever, why should we not ac-
 “ knowledge a true God, to whom we build temples, and
 “ of whom we ourselves are temples ‡?” The same writ-
 ter, while he vindicates the custom of Christians, in having
 their religious assemblies at the sepulchres or Memories of
 the martyrs, as the fittest place for raising their affections,
 and quickening their love towards the martyrs, and towards
 God; yet denies that any sacrifice, or any other part of re-
 ligious worship was offered up to them. “ All the worship
 “ that they give them is that of love and society, and of
 “ the same kind which we give to holy men in this life,
 “ who are ready to suffer for the truth of the Gospel.—
 “ The

* Euseb. *de Laud. Const.*

† Bell. *de cult. Sanct.* l. 3. c. 4.

‡ Aug. *adv. Max. Ar.* l. 1. Aug. *de civit. Dei*, l. 20. c. 10. & l. 8. c. 27.

“ The Gentiles,” said he, “ build temples, erect altars, appoint priests, and offer sacrifices : but we erect no temples to martyrs, as to gods, but Memories, as to dead men, whose spirits live with God : we raise no altars, on which to sacrifice to martyrs, but to one God, the God of martyrs, as well as ours ; at which, as men of God, who have overcome the world by confessing him, they are named in their place and order, but are not invoked by the priest who sacrifices.—Whatever the Christians do at the Memories of the martyrs, is for ornaments to those Memories, not as any sacred rites or sacrifices belonging to the dead as gods : we therefore do not worship our martyrs with divine honours, nor with the faults of men, as the Gentiles did their gods.” Yet this good bishop of Hippo could say, “ Let blessed Cyprian help us in our prayers ; and that Christian people should, with religious solemnity, celebrate the memory of martyrs, both to excite them to the imitation of them, and that they may become partakers of their merits, and may be helped by their prayers.”

Isidore, who has himself been fainted, and is commemorated yearly on the 4th of April, gives the following account of the practice of the Church in the beginning of the seventh century : “ All the churches offer the sacrifice for the dead ; therefore it may be supposed, that this practice is grounded upon a tradition delivered by the Apostles themselves. The holidays observed by the Church are all Sundays throughout the year, the feast of the nativity of Epiphany, Palm-sunday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday in Easter-week ; Easter-day, Ascension and Pentecost ; the festivals of the Apostles, and the martyrs, and of the dedication of churches ; these festivals have been wisely appointed, to the end that the faithful often meeting together, may be inspired with faith, and rejoice with a holy joy : we solemnize the festivals of the martyrs, that we may be excited to follow their examples, and recommend ourselves to their prayers ; but we do not pay them divine worship, which is due to God alone : for which reason we do not offer the sacrifice to them. We render them these honours from a spirit of charity, not of servitude *.” Even Pope Innocent III. pronounced, “ That the temples and altars appertain to the worship of *Latria*,—they ought not to be dedicated to saints in
“ honour

* *Isid. de Offic. cap. 24, 25, 35, &c.*

“ honour of God, for fear that the doing otherwise might be found not to contribute to the service of God, but to idolatry *.”

But notwithstanding the piety and utility that was first pretended, as the reason for honouring the memory of saints; and the care taken for a time to keep the religious honour from terminating on them, but to direct it to the supreme object of worship; notwithstanding, the frequent checks which instances of this idolatry met with from the more enlightened; and the artful distinctions and specious colourings which were used to palliate others, it continued to make daily progress. The honorary institutions observed continually by the churches, and the mention made of them often by name, on certain days, and in certain services; with the hyperbolical declamations of their warmer doctors †, aided at last by the bigotry and fraudulent tales and practices of monks, made it take full possession of the minds of the people, till it became universal, was taught in the doctrine of schoolmen, authorised by canons, and established as a term of communion with the Catholic Church. All were obliged in the tenth century to celebrate the memory of the saints, under pain of excommunication. Nor was the homage paid to them confined to themselves, but extended to all that had been sanctified by the touch of their dead bodies, and to images that represented them: So that it came to be owned as “ an undoubted truth among Catholics, that the relics of saints, whether they be part of them, as their bones, their flesh, their ashes, or other things which have touched them, and belonged to them, ought to be worshipped, and deemed worthy of sacred honour ‡:” An astonishing excess in idolatry, to which the

* “ Ne forte si secus agitur non *Theosebia*, sed *idolatria* committatur.” *Innoc. de Myst. Mis. lib. 3.*

† “ Le terme de *missa* n'étoit pas si dangereux que la nouvelle rhétorique qu'on étala bien-tôt après. L'église célébroit la mémoire des saints par le récit de leurs vertus. On donna à ces panegyriques tous les ornemens du langage, et l'on s'y servit de tous les préceptes de l'éloquence, on usa de prosopopées et d'apostrophes. Mais quelque différence qu'il y ait entre une figure de rhétorique et l'invocation des saints le style des orateurs fut en quelque manière le prélude de l'abus qui suivit. A leur exemple, les ignorans et les superstitieux commenceroient peu à peu à s'adresser aux saints, comme s'ils eussent pu l'entendre.” *Hist. des Cerem. & des Superst. an. 380.*

‡ Those convened in the second Council of Nice, confess, “ *Osia, cineres, pannos, sanguinem, sepulchra denique martyrum adoramus;*” and they

the Pagans never arrived, although they furnished them with the first lessons.

Plutarch relates of Theseus, that "the Athenians revered him as a demi-god, and the oracle of Apollo, which they had consulted, answered, that they should gather the bones of Theseus, and putting them in an honourable place, should religiously preserve them; which obliged them to depute Cimon to go in search of his sepulchre, the place whereof was wholly unknown: but Cimon having discovered it by means of an eagle, which had perched thereon, he carried his bones to Athens, where they were received with universal applause, with solemn processions and sacrifices;" and Plutarch adds, that "these relics were still in Athens in his time*." E-lian relates, that there was a very great dispute among the successors of *Alexander* the Great, who should have his body, holding that in all places where it should be, it would be attended with victory and safety; and that upon the credit of his chief soothsayer, who affirmed, that it had been divinely revealed to him. Epiphanius also relates, that the Pagans of Egypt paid their devotions near the sepulchre where Jeremiah was said to be buried, because they thought he protected them from the crocodiles and from asses. And as the Pagans were wont to erect monuments and altars near the grave of those they intended to honour †, so they sometimes swore by laying their hands on their sepulchres, as Herodotus affirms of the Nefamones ‡. All this is little, compared

they enjoin, that images be preserved and adored, and the worship of them perpetually taught, and they curse those that hold the contrary. Bonaventure, with many others, hold, "that the image is to be worshipped with the same worship, as is due to the person it represents." Bellarmine says, "that images are not only to be worshipped as resemblances, but also properly by themselves." Ambrose Catharinus maintains, "that images are not merely for instruction,—and to excite devotion, but they are set up properly for worship, therefore, if any one ask another, are images to be worshipped? Let him answer, without fear, they are: the contrary opinion is repugnant to the practice of the Church, because we direct our gestures, our words, and signs of adoration to the images, to which we likewise burn incense." *De cult. Imag.* According to Archbishop Arundel's constitution, images are to be honoured by procession, genuflection, bowing of the body, thurification, deosculations, oblations, burning of lights, and pilgrimages. Cornelius Agrippa acknowledges, "we bow our heads to them, we kiss them, we offer lights to them, we dedicate gifts, we apply miracles, and buy pardons of them; we go in pilgrimage to them, we make vows to them, we worship them." *De Vanit. Scient.* c. 57.

* *In Vit. These.*

† *Stant Manibus aræ.* Virg. *En.* 3.

‡ Herod. *Melpom.*

compared with the devotion paid to relics, by those called Christians.

+ Though at first the bodies of the martyrs were carefully collected and buried, when they could be found, yet before the middle of the fourth century, we find Athanasius censuring some Christians in Egypt, for keeping their dead bodies, and those of other pious persons, and carrying them about with them from place to place, placing them on small beds of state, instead of burying them:—and often, after their burial they were again disinterred;—the tombs were ransacked, and their ashes disturbed: limbs were transported and dispersed through various parts; processions and pilgrimages were made to the place where they rested, especially after they became famous for the many miracles they were said to have wrought *: A divine virtue began to be ascribed

* “ Did the Emperor Constantius,” says Jerome, “ commit a sacrilege, “ when he transported to Constantinople the blessed relics of Andrew, Luke “ and Timothy, in the presence of which the evil spirits used to roar out “ aloud ? Must we also say, that the Emperor Arcadius was guilty of sacrilege for having, after such a long space of time transmitted the bones of “ the ever-blessed Samuel from Judea to Thrace ? All the Bishops must not “ only be thought sacrilegious, but even madmen, for having carried unworthy ashes in golden cups and rich silks. The people of all churches “ were senseless for going to meet the holy relics, and receiving the prophet with as great a joy, as if they had seen him present and living ; in so “ much that their numbers extended from Palestine to Caladonia, and they “ praised Jesus Christ with one voice.” This translation of the bones of the prophet took place in 406 ; when the Emperor with the chief of his court and senate joined in the procession. In defence of keeping the saints vigils, Jerome insists upon the miracles which were commonly wrought at their tombs, and adds, “ when I have been perplexed with anger, or evil “ thoughts, &c. I have not dared to enter into the churches of the martyrs.”

Cont. Vigil.

Among the first of these wonders that made a noise, was the silencing of the demon of Daphne in the time of Julian. The temple of Daphne was situated in the midst of a sacred delicious grove in the neighbourhood of Antioch. It was dedicated to Apollo and his sister Diana ; had the privilege of an asylum ; was famous for its oracle, and the worship paid to the Divinity, who was supposed to favour it with his residence and protection. The people of Antioch, and the neighbouring cities assembled here every year to celebrate a solemn festival. Julian was desirous of having the oracle restored : for it seems, eleven years before, in order to sanctify this profane place, Cæsar Gallus had caused the relics of St Babylas to be brought thither from Antioch, and since that time the oracle had been silent. He spared neither victims nor oblations, yet it returned no answer, only at last it told the reason of its silence, and said, “ that it could no more give oracles, because “ the place was full of dead bodies.” Julian apprehended, that his god complained of the martyr Babylas, and therefore commanded the Christians to remove his coffin. A croud, composed of all ages and sexes, convened for that purpose, and having placed the precious coffer on a chariot, they conveyed it to Antioch. They looked upon this translation as a triumph of the martyr

ascribed to them for the health both of soul and body. Devils were said to be charmed, diseases cured, and even the dead raised; which effects were imputed to the power and prayers of the glorified, and adduced as sure proofs of the notice they took of mens devotions at their sepulchres. Strange visions and revelations were also talked of, discovering the sepulchres and ashes of some that had been quite forgotten, or never before heard of*. Their bones were raised

martyr over the devils, and expressed their joy by singing of Psalms all the way, for the space of near two leagues. The best singers began, and were answered by all the people, repeating at the end of each verse, "Confounded be all they that worship graven images, and that boast themselves of their idols," and their voice reached unto the heavens.

These relics were repositied in the holy place from whence they had been formerly translated; and soon after the temple of Daphne was set on fire, and the whole roof burnt, together with the ornaments and statue of Apollo. It was not certainly known how the fire was kindled: but the Christians made no question, but that it was sent from God at the prayer of the martyr St Babylas. *Fleury's Eccles. Hist. B. xv. an. 362.*

Chrysostome, in an oration, referring to this story, says, "If any man believes not these things, which are said to be done by the Apostles, let him now, beholding the present, desist from his impudence." *Cont. Gent.*

* "God gave a visible consolation to the Church of Milan, by discovering to St Ambrose by revelation, the relics of St Gervase and St Protas, two brothers and martyrs, whose names and place of burial had long been forgotten. St Ambrose having dedicated the basilick, which is still called *Ambrosiana*, the people with one voice desired him to dedicate it like the *basilica Romana*: he replied, I will, if I find any relics of martyrs; and immediately he felt a warmth within him, which he looked upon as a lucky omen. For God revealed to him in a dream, that the bodies of St Gervase and St Protas, were in the basilick of St Felix and St Nabor. Notwithstanding the apprehensions of his clergy, he caused the ground to be opened before the rails that surrounded the sepulchre of the martyrs. He found probable signs; perhaps palm leaves engraved or some instrument of torture. He caused certain that were possessed to be sent for, in order to lay hands on them; but before he had begun to speak, one of them was seized with a devil, and stretched upon the ground in the place where the martyrs whom they were seeking, lay. Having discovered their sepulchres, they found two men who seemed of more than ordinary size, all their bones were entire, there was abundance of blood, and their heads were separated from their bodies. They set them in order, covered them, and laid them on biers. They were carried towards the evening to the basilick of Fausta; where they celebrated their vigils all night, and several that were possessed, received imposition of hands. That day and the next, there was a great concourse of people; and then the old men recollected that they had formerly heard the names of these martyrs, and read the inscription of their tomb. The next day the relics were transferred to the *basilica Ambrosiana*. One Severus, who had been blind several years, understanding the reason of the public joy, rose up hastily, and caused himself to be carried to the bodies of the saints, when he was come thither, they let him approach so near as to touch the bier with an handkerchief. As soon as he had applied the handkerchief to his eyes, they were opened, and he returned without any body to lead him.—This

" translation

raised in triumph, carried in solemn procession, and gloriously enshrined. Relics became an article of ungodly traffic: they were esteemed above the richest jewels; and happy were the places and the persons who could enjoy them; though often they were nothing more than the most sordid and contemptible objects in nature, hawked about by impostors. Augustine complained in his time, "That the devil had dispersed in every corner a crew of hypocrites, under the habit of Monks, who gadded about through every country, and settled nowhere.—Some selling the limbs of martyrs, if such they were, and all asking either the expence of a gainful poverty, or the hire of a counterfeited sanctity." Practices of this sort occasioned the rescript of Theodosius, which forbade any to dismember, or make merchandize of a martyr *. But the relics deposited

translation was accompanied with a great many other miracles; persons possessed were delivered; sick persons were healed by touching the vestments that covered the saints, and some merely by their shadow. A great number of handkerchiefs and garments were cast upon the holy relics, and preserved as remedies against diseases. It is St Ambrose himself who bears testimony to this in one of his sermons which he made on this occasion, wherein he returned thanks to Jesus Christ for affording such relief to his Church at a time when she stood so much in need of it, and declares, that he desires no other defence; adding, Let us put these victims of triumph in the same place where Jesus Christ is a sacrifice.—He was for burying the relics immediately under the altar, but the people desired by loud cries, to have that ceremony, which was called depositing, deferred until Sunday; at last Ambrose prevailed with them to let it be performed next day." Fleury, *Eccles. Hist. B. xviii. § 57. an. 386. Paul. vit. Ambr.*

It was on this occasion, that Ambrose, in his letter to his sister, boasted, "*reparata vetusti temporis miracula cernitis*;" "you see the miracles of ancient times renewed." *Epist. 22.* And Augustine, referring to these and such-like events, tells us, "that they made an order to have bills given out of such miracles as were done, when they saw the miracles of ancient times renewed in theirs. *De Civit. Dei. l. 22. cap. 8. & Conf. ix. c. 7.*"

In the time of Theodosius, the relics of forty martyrs who were said to have suffered under Licinius, were found at Constantinople. They were revealed to St Pulcheria by the martyr St Thyrsis, who appeared three several times to her, and ordered her to translate these relics which were concealed under ground, and deposit them near his:—The forty martyrs did likewise themselves appear clothed in white mantles.—When found, linen clothes were let down to touch the relics. The Empress Pulcheria caused them to be enclosed in a very rich shrine, and placed near those of St Thyrsis. This translation was celebrated with great solemnity as a public festival. *Sozom. Hist. l. 9. c. 2.*

"Tam multos hypocritas sub habitu monachorum usquequaque dispersit Satan, circumeuntes provincias, nusquam missos, nusquam fixos, nusquam stantes, nusquam sedentes. Alii membra martyrum, si tamen martyrum venditant, &c." *De Oper. Monach. cap. 28.*

Gregory

posited in the sacred treasures of the Church, though continually multiplying, became more and more awful and venerable: They were presents reserved for princely favourites, and sometimes hardly granted even upon their pious request. When Constantina the Empress desired of St Gregory the head of St Paul, or any other part of his body, to place in the church which was built in honour of that Apostle at Constantinople, he returned her this memorable answer: “ You order me to do what I neither can, nor dare do; “ for the bodies of the Apostles St Peter and St Paul have “ rendered themselves so terrible, by their miracles, that “ no man can come near them, even to pray, without “ being seized with great fear. My predecessor being desirous to change an ornament of silver, which was upon “ the body of St Peter, though at the distance of fifteen “ feet, saw a terrible apparition. I myself desired to repair something near the body of St Paul, for the doing “ of which, it was necessary to dig a little, before you come “ to the sepulchre: the superior of the place found some “ bones, which notwithstanding they did not touch the sepulchre, upon his translating them to another place, he “ died suddenly, after a very frightful vision. My predecessor likewise designed to repair something near the body “ of St Lawrence, and as they were digging, they all of a sudden opened the sepulchre; but the monks and mansionaries who were working there, after they had seen “ the body, without ever touching it, died all of them in “ the space of ten days.—You are therefore to know, Madam, that when the Romans present the relics of saints, “ they do not touch the bodies: their method is, only to “ put a piece of linen in a box, which is placed near the “ holy body, and which they afterwards take away, and “ shut up, with suitable veneration, in the church which “ they are going to dedicate; and it performs as many miracles

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Gregory of Tours, speaks of a certain counterfeit monk, who pretended to come out of Spain with martyrs relics, but being discovered, they were found to be certain herbs, with bones of mice, and such-like stuff, and says there were many such seducers who deluded the people. *Hist. Franc. l. 9.* The abundance of counterfeit relics occasioned a canon in a certain Council in Spain, ordering such as were suspected to be delivered to the Bishops, that they might be tried by fire; for it seems, they believed that true relics could not be burnt. To what a scandalous height the traffic of relics increased, and what a number of ridiculous and spurious baubles were imposed on the credulity of the people in the later ages, those who are versant in the history of modern superstition well know.

" racles as if the whole body had been transferred thither.
 " In the time of the Pope *St Leo*, some Greeks doubting of
 " the virtue of these relics, brought some scissars and cut
 " the linen, from whence proceeded some blood, as is re-
 " ported by the ancient inhabitants: for not only at Rome,
 " but in all the west, the touching of the bodies of saints is
 " looked upon as a piece of sacrilege. For which reason,
 " we are very much surpris'd at the custom of the Greeks,
 " of taking away the bones of saints. Some Grecian
 " monks came about two years since, and in the night-
 " time dug up the dead bodies in a field near the church of
 " St Paul, and locked up the bones: being taken in the
 " fact, and a strict examination being made why they did
 " it, they confessed, that they had a design to carry these
 " bones into Greece, as relics." Having made this hand-
 " some excuse, for not doing what was not in his power to
 " execute, he adds, " But that your pious desire may not be
 " entirely frustrated, I will immediately send you some
 " dust of the chains which St Paul wore about his neck and
 " hands, and which work a great many miracles, if it is
 " possible for me to draw any thing from them with the
 " file. It is customary for people often to desire some of
 " this dust, and the bishop, with the file, sometimes draws
 " a quantity in a little time, and sometimes files a great
 " while without effect *." Some time after this, we find
 " Pope Vitalian, in return for a great quantity of gold and
 " silver plate sent him from Oswi and Egbert, princes in
 " England, making a like valuable present. In the letter he
 " wrote to the former, in which he exhorted him to an en-
 " tire conformity to the traditions of the Roman Church, as
 " well in keeping of Easter, as in other points of discipline,
 " he says, " We send you relics of the blessed Apostles St Pe-
 " ter and St Paul, and of the martyrs St Lawrence, St
 " John, St Gregory, and St Pancrace; and to the queen
 " your wife, we send a cross made of a golden key, which
 " contains some of the chains of St Peter †."

By this admirable method, which was contrived, of mul-
 tiplying the relics of saints, the objects of religious veneration
 were infinitely increased. Those who could not attain
 to the possession of an entire body, or any limb or particle
 of one, though even these were often multiplied to an in-
 credible degree, and the same body or member was kept
 and

* Greg. Ep. iii. 30.

† Bed. Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 29.

and worshipped in a variety of places at once *; yet they might easily be provided with something or other that belonged to the saint, or had touched his body, or nearly approached it, which might answer every purpose fully as well, when the pairings of his nails, or the pollings of his hair, or a few scabs, were too difficult and precious an acquisition, they would haply find some handkerchief, or cowl, or slipper, or girdle, or comb, or cord, or latchet, some rag of wool or sackcloth; or some lucky stone, or chain, or spear, or nail, or gridiron, whereby he had suffered, or some filings of these at least, all of them, like artificial magnets, fit substitutes to the original, having acquired the same sanctity and miraculous virtue at second-hand. This way the same saint came to be worshipped in a hundred different places, and under a hundred different species or material representations of him. Every church and monastery greedily collected, religiously preserved, and ostentatiously displayed these kinds of treasures; and became rich both spiritually and temporally, according to the quantity and reputed quality of them. The temples once more began literally to wear the appearance of sepulchres, being full of coffins, urns, blood, dust and dead mens bones; and hung about with scutcheons, trophies and emblematical memorials. It was the great work of the priests to magnify these objects to the gazing people, and to descant, especially on the proper festivals, on the singular and superior merits of their saint, his images and relics; and like mountebanks, to produce a list of miraculous cures which had been effected by him; to engage them to fast patiently, and feast merrily in his honour; and to kneel devoutly, and offer liberally at his shrine.

Without tracing down the progress of this abominable superstition to its last stages, or describing the various branches
and

* To say nothing of the pretended relics of Christ, and the Virgin Mary, which have been multiplied to a surprising degree, we are told that the body of St Peter is preserved and shewn the half of it at St Peter's in Rome, the other half at St Paul's; and yet his head is at the Lateran, his jaws at Poitiers, and many of his bones at Triers, his very shadow is yet said to be remaining. Again, the face of John Baptist is at St Jean Angeli, the rest of his head at Malta, his skull at Nemours, his jaw-bone at Vesulium, his forehead at St Salvatore; and yet his whole head is to be seen at St Sylvester in Rome, and at Amiens in France, and at Gaunt in Flanders. And the finger of the same Saint, wherewith they say, he pointed to the Saviour, saying *Ecce*, is produced at Besançon, at Tholouse, at Lyons, at Bourges, and at Florence: besides innumerable other shams of the same kind which might be produced.

and shapes into which it expanded itself, let us remark the final result of the whole, which was to restore the worship of the creature, to the dishonour of the Creator, who is God blessed for ever: and let us not forget the commemorating principle in which it began, and under which it hath all along sheltered itself. Those whom they proposed at first to honour as servants, were adored as lords. Those who were commemorated as examples of virtue and of valour, or as instruments of divine benefits, were soon applied to, not only as mediators with God, but even addressed as the sovereign authors of these virtues, or bestowers of these benefits. They intercepted the divine homage, and what religious honour was paid, was nominally to God, but really to them *. As they were considered as more familiar, sympathising and humane, they were more frequently applied

* In a hymn to the Apostles in the Roman service-book commonly used, is the following address: "O ye judges and lights of the world, command that we sinners be released from our guilt, heal unsound minds, increase their virtues;" and, in a manual of their prayers, "O ye blessed Apostles, defend me from the pains of hell, rescue me from the power of darkness, and bring me to the everlasting kingdom." In the festival of All-saints, "O all ye heavenly lords, deliver us from our sins, lift up them that fall;—drive away future evil, together with the present,—place us in the seat of the saints,—and may the triumphant company of martyrs, priests, &c. wash away our guilt." To St Peter they pray, "Loose the bands of our sins by thy word, who hast power to open heaven."—To St Agnes, "O woman of the lamb, do thou enlighten us within, destroy the root of sin,—translate us to the company of the blessed." To St Martin, "Do thou protect thy native soil, give the rest of peace to the lands of Christians,—be a revenger of innocent blood, and utterly destroy the enemies power,—show the way to the blind, give speech to the dumb, purge away our filth."—To St Katharine, "Make my mind immoveable in that which is good, bestow on me a contrite heart."—To the Virgin and St John together, "O ye two heavenly lights, drive away with your blessed beams the dark clouds of my sin: to you I commend this day my body and soul, that in every hour and moment, ye would vouchsafe to be my sure keepers."—To St Bernard, "O thou who art the hope and comfort of all that cry unto thee, I commit myself with all my heart unto thy protection."

It is common stile in all the offices composed in honour of the saints, to pray to be delivered from all evils, through their merits and intercession: Upon the octaves of St Peter and St Paul, they desire they may obtain eternal glory by their merits;—and on other occasions, that their sacrifice may be accepted through the merits of St Andrew;—that they may be delivered by the merits of St Nicholas from the fire of hell;—that by the prayers and merits of St Thomas, they may be translated from vice to virtue, from a prison to a kingdom.

To St Ann, "grant that by the merits both of mother and daughter, we may obtain the kingdom of heaven."—To St Matthias, "I pray that by thy merits, I may enjoy eternal life." And, in another office, "May the Lord, through the prayers and merits of the Virgin Mary, and of all saints, lead us to the kingdom of heaven." *Breviar. Rom. & Missal.*

plied to than the adorable Trinity, and more confided in than the gracious Redeemer, whose mediation and intercession were hereby rendered of small account. To such height of impudence and blasphemy did these devout commemorators of saints arrive, as not to scruple to ascribe to them the titles, attributes and acts of the Saviour and Supreme God *. And in the phrenzy of this devotion, he to

* St Sebastian is stiled, " Our preserver and governor, from whom is all our hope," and so of many others. But the blasphemy wherewith the Virgin Mary is perpetually addressed and adored, exceeds every thing else. She is their " Almighty Lady, their goddess, the mother of the whole Trinity, the Queen of Angels, Patriarchs, &c. the fountain of grace, the refuge of sinners, the gate of heaven, the way to life, the author of salvation, the hope of the world, the tree of life, the well of living water, the ocean of graces, the light of the churches, the buckler of mankind, the ark of the covenant, the judge of quick and dead, the morning star, the redeemer of mankind, the conqueress of hell, the governess of heaven, and of all the world, the mother and lady of the universe." They say, " that her kingdom is as large as her Son's, her milk being equally esteemed with her Son's blood; that it is fit she should enjoy all that belongs to her Son, and therefore the glory of being adored by all men; that we ought to entrust her with what we have, do, or hope in life, death, and through all eternity; in whom is placed the fulness of all that is good; that no person is saved but by her; that all the gates of heaven are at her devotion; that 'tis not possible those should be saved from whom she turns away the eyes of her mercy; that the mother's mercy hath often saved those whom the Son has a mind to damn; that there is no sinner so far from God, but may obtain mercy, provided only he calls upon her, and places his trust in her;" and, in fine, " That more quick relief is sometimes found by commemorating the name of Mary, than by calling on the name of Christ;" as Anselm affirms, (*de Excell. B. Vir. c. 6.*) and many others.

Accordingly many manuals, psalters, hours, and rosaries have been composed for helping men to her favour.—all of them in the most fulsome strain of idolatrous adulation.—" I humbly beg of thee, O mother of clemency, to admit me to the number of thy servants;—Our life, our hope; to thee we sigh, to thee we cry, poor banished sons of Eve, to thee we sigh, our advocate.—We fly to thy protection, deliver us from all danger. O Virgin, remitting our sins, give the kingdom where the blessed company do reign, for thou, as queen of the world, art able to do *all* things, and with thy Son disposest all rights."—" I beseech thee O queen of heaven forgive me, for 'tis against thee only have I sinned."—" Oh mother of God, the glory of all, thou alone rulest the stars, thou alone art the light of the earth, &c."—" Oh queen of the world, salvation of those that perish, lift me up;—thou sweetest patron of the miserable, the only hope of the desperate, the saviour of sinners, help me O Saviouress, redeem me, O Redeemeress."—" O holy mother, I know that nothing is hid from thee, and that by your deity, you exactly understand all my thoughts.—" O Virgin, you have forgot your humanity because you have been deified,—" O empress and our lady, by the authority of a mother, command thy Son, our Lord.—"

Some worshippers of Mary, represent her as saying, " The will of the blessed Trinity, and mine is all one, and whatsoever does please me, the holy Trinity

to whom none of the sons of the mighty are come terrible, who says, "To whom will ye liken me?" has not only been

"Trinity gives consent unto."—Some missals have contained such passages as these "Compel God to be merciful to sinners:—Thou callest thyself the handmaid of Jesus Christ, but reason teacheth that the mother is above the Son, therefore command him from above, that he lead us to his kingdom at the world's end." And they declare, that "All things are subject to the command of the Virgin, even God himself."—"It cannot be that any should not be heard upon seeking to her, because to all purposes, and in all things, and through all things, God does obey her as his true mother." *Promptuar. Discipul. de Miracul. B. V. ex. 14. Fulk. Rhem. Test. Luk. 1. Bonavent. Coron. V. M. oper. to. 6. Hill. Chor. Aug. Commemorat. V. M. Bern. Senens. Ser. 61. Biblioth. Part. tom. 12. p. 704.*

Others of the same impious fraternity, have not scrupled to say, "Omnia quæ Dei sunt, Mariæ sunt, quia mater et sponsa Dei illa est." And Bernard de Buftis, avers, "Tot creaturæ serviunt gloriæ Mariæ Virgini quot serviunt Trinitatis." The same author declares, "That our Lord was with Mary, and Mary with our Lord, in the same work of our redemption." And whereas it is said, *Eccl. lxiii. I have trodden the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with me;* "It is true Lord," saith he, "There was no man with thee, but there was a woman with thee, who suffered all the wounds in her heart which thou didst suffer in thy body." *Bern. in Mar. par. 12.* They teach that she gave her Son to men, and offered him up a sacrifice for them; and in offering him up for all, she hath obtained salvation for all; and that this act of hers is most meritorious, and deserves to be put on a level with the Passion of Jesus Christ. Hence in their devotions, they express themselves at a loss, whether to have recourse for salvation to the blood of Christ, or to the milk of the Virgin.

Hereo lac inter meditans, interque cruorem,
Inter delicias uberis et lateris, &c.

Says the Jesuit Carol Scribonius: And in a famous hymn, wherein a person is supposed to be looking on Jesus on the cross shedding his blood, and Mary at the foot of it shedding tears, is the following expression:

Positus in medio
Quo me vertam nescio.

Some of these indiscreet devotees have even gone the length to say, "That persons may attach themselves only to the Virgin, and neglect the Son: that devotion for her is to be preferred to the love of God, and the trust which should be put in him." In the devotion of the Rosary, which was instituted in her honour, there are ten prayers addressed to her for one to God; and even these have been also considered as belonging to her. A warm debate subsisted among certain friars in Scotland at the beginning of the Reformation, whether the Pater noster should not also be said to the Saints. More than one Saint have been compared and equalled with Christ. A whole book was wrote of the conformity of Christ and St Francis, even to the wounds of the crucifixion. On the great porch of the convent of Cordeliers at Reims was the following inscription:

Deo homini, et beato Francisco
Utique crucifixo.

And of him it was affirmed, "Nihil Christus fecit quod ille non fecit, imo plura fecit quam Christus." The name of Francis, or friar Juniperus was more terrible to the devils than that of Christ, making them to tremble and fly at seven leagues distance. Some demons who had despised the name of Jesus,

been compared, and put on a level with deceased, and once sinful mortals, but the latter sometimes have received the preference. Every part of the Bible, even these passages in which the incommunicable and ineffable glory of JEHOVAH are set forth, have been diabolically changed and perverted to utter forth their praise, and to teach men the highest strains of idolatrous saint-worship. With this express view, the psalter was accommodated to the honour of the Virgin Mary, by St Bonaventure; and the whole Bible by Albert the Great *. Never was the true object of adoration more signally dishonoured, nor his worship alienated by the nations who served *gods many, and lords many*, than by the monstrous system of *Dulia* and *Hyperdulia*. The whole attention of the religious world, for ages, was engrossed by it, and their time, strength and wealth employed in it. All places and persons, all days, churches, prayers, vows and offerings were infected with it. Besides the honour paid in common to the whole multitude, every kingdom †, city,

Jesus, are said to have trembled also at the name of Ignatius. The Jesuit Deza, said of his master, "That God in the last days hath spoken to us "by his son Ignatius, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, &c." *Prejudg. Legit. contr. le papisme.*

* In the Mary Psalter, for the support of which there was a fraternity instituted and confirmed by Sixtus IV. instead of the name of God or Lord, that of Mary is inserted, and such addresses as these made to her. "The heavens declare thy glory, O Lady.—I will praise thee good Lady, with all my heart—O thou my good Lady, in thee have I put my trust."—"Rejoice in our Lady, O ye righteous,—Her praise shall be in my mouth continually.—According to the bowels of thy compassion blot out mine iniquities.—Cleanse my heart, O Lady.—Into thy hands I commit my spirit, my whole life and last day.—The Lord said unto my Lady, sit thou at my right hand."

In like manner, in the Marian Bible, she is found in every page; she is the empyrean heaven, and the light created in the beginning; the altar of Noah, the bow in the clouds; the ladder of Jacob, the house of God, and the gate of Heaven; the propitiatory, the rock smitten; she is the mystical Ruth, Abishag, Esther.—She is the wisdom celebrated in the Proverbs, by whom Kings reign; whom the Lord possessed in the beginning of his ways before his works of old: "she is the star in the east; the altar of our oblations; and the mother of the restitution of all things. And to her are applied the words, "God hath highly exalted him and given him a name above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow;"—and "all power is given to me in heaven and in earth."

† Of old time the Babylonians had Bel for their protector, the Egyptians Isis and Osiris; Rome Jupiter Capitolinus, Mars and Quirinus; Ephesus; Diana; the Cyprians Venus, &c. So France hath for protectors St Michael and St Dennis; Spain St James; Germany St Martin and Boniface; Ireland St Patrick; England St George; Scotland St Andrew; Wales St David; the Muscovites St Nicholas; the Poles St Stanislaus; the Bavarians St Wolfgang; the Swiss the Holy Virgin and St Gall; the West Indies St Rosa.

city *, church, corporation and trade †; all fraternities of a civil or religious nature, as well as private families and persons

* Almost all cities revere the Virgin Mary, being considered as an universal protectress, or as the garden of the rosary styles her, "The arch-mother of the universe." Rome is under the custody of St Peter and St Paul; Venice of St Mark; Naples St Thomas Aquinas; Antwerp St Eligia and Nordbert; Paris St Genevieve; Boileuduc St John; the gates bore this inscription before it fell into the hands of the Reformed 1629 :

*Hanc portam cives que tuos, arasque, focosque,
Custodi dilecte Deo, patrone Johannes.*

When the city was besieged, and they had solicited the patronage of John in vain, they had recourse to Mary, whose image was often carried about the city with silver keys hung at it, as an emblem of subjection to her authority; vows were also made of erecting a chapel to Mary the Deliverer, in memory of the favour, if she had been pleased to bestow it. But she too remaining deaf to their prayers, her image was led into captivity, and the old patron was not supplanted: as one describes it, "Diva enim hæc post captam urbem adytis excessit, imaginemque ejus domicella quædam *Ilum in exilium portans victosque penates* cum luctu et lachrymis Bruxellas transfudit; ubi ab archiducissa Isabella obviam ei procedente religiose excepta est." As we read of the Chinese and others whipping and maltreating their idols when they do not gratify their wishes, so has it fared sometimes with these tutelary saints when they have disappointed the hopes of their clients, and not acquitted themselves well in their charge, they have sometimes been displaced, and their images broken, or drowned with infamy. From this custom of choosing particular patrons, and worshipping them as the Ephesians did their great goddess Diana, the inhabitants have sometimes taken their distinguishing appellation; the Venetians designed themselves, the citizens of St Mark; the inhabitants of Louvain, Peter's men;—those of Utrecht, Martin's men, or the servant's of St Martin, &c. *Voet. Diss. de Patronat. Præf. Sanctorum.*

† Arnobius formerly taxed the Pagans for their folly in forging to themselves gods exercising different arts, and excelling in different professions, one being a carpenter, another a smith, a third a musician; others mariners, physicians, diviners, soldiers, or cow-keepers; thus the orators and poets acknowledged the patronage of Apollo, Minerva, and the Muses; the physicians, Esculapius; the warriors, Mars; the hammermen, Vulcan, the hunters, Diana, &c. But the place and offices of these antiquated divinities have been abundantly supplied under the Papacy. St Gregory and St Catharine preside over the literati; St Thomas over the divines; St Cecilia the musicians; St Cosmo and Damien, the physicians and surgeons; St Ives, the lawyers; St Luke, the painters; St Eloi, the goldsmiths and farriers; St Eustache, the hunters; St Nicolas and St Christopher the mariners; St Euloge the jockies; St Jesse and St Urban the plowmen; St Wendelin the shepherds; St Anthony the swine-herds; St John the masons: Crispin the shoemakers; Gutman and Severinus the taylor; Goar the potters; Joseph the carpenters; Leonard the locksmiths; Arnold the millers; Urban the gardeners; Adrian the brewers; Honoratus the bakers; Julian the travellers; George the military, &c.

From thence also arose the various orders of knighthood, under the patronage of Mary, John, James, George, Andrew, &c. which bear the names, wear the ensigns, and take the oaths of homage and fidelity to their several ideal patrons; some of which, to the scandal of religion and of common sense, are still retained in honour in Protestant nations; making so many regiments or corps on the idolatrous establishment. Hence also the various orders of monks

persons, had their particular patrons and tutelary fairs, under whose banners they enlisted, and under whose protection they thought themselves safe; in return for which they allowed them some distinguished service, and their high annual festivals, conform to the genius of ancient Paganism. Like that too, for every action, and for every member of the body, for every part of goods and property *, for obtaining every blessing, for the cure of every disease, and the averting of every calamity †, some one or other of these tutelary beings was appointed, and devoutly

O

applied

monks and friars; and the various societies and fraternities which have arisen in every province and city professing the Romish faith. On all these various forms has demoniacal or saint-worship been established and maintained; with innumerable superstitious ceremonies, and a profane celebration of their several days.

* Augustine writes a whole chapter of the various employments which the Gentiles had assigned to their gods and goddesses: some of them of the lowest, basest and most ridiculous kind; one could not open the mouth, or sneeze, or spit, or go to stool, without an assisting divinity. "They cut out to every god his task, and according to that distribution," they tell you, "you must direct your prayers to each of them, according to his office."—He reckons up no less than a dozen different divinities all employed about a stalk of corn. As various are the tasks assigned to the saintly presidents: Odilia takes care of the head; Blaise of the throat; Laurence of the back and shoulders; Erasmus of the belly and intestines; Appolinaris and Briccius, &c. The different kinds of animals, as well as elements, vegetables and minerals, have their guardians. Pelagius keeps the oxen; Hubert the dogs; Wandlin the sheep; John Baptist the lambs; Anthony the hogs; Feriele the geese; Gallus the poultry; Udalric and Gertrude, the mice and rats. Or as the old English rhymes express it,

To St Syth for my purse,
St Loi save my horse,
For my teeth to St Apolline:
St Job for the pox,
St Luke save mine ox,
And St Anthony keep my swine.

† Anciently Apollo was prayed to against the plague; Hercules against the epilepsy; Juno and Lucina were invoked by child-bearing women:—But now, St Roch and St Sebastian, for the pestilence; Valentine, for the epilepsy; Liberius, for nephritic pains; Wolfgang, for the palsy; Matellinus and Romanus and Dymna, for madness and frenzy; Appolinaris, for the stone; Quintine, for the cough; Eutropius, for the dropsy; Fiacre, the hemorrhoids; Clara, Lucia, Otilia, for sore eyes; Appolonia and Christopher, for the toothach; Agatha and Mammartus, for sore breasts; Maurice and others, for the gout in the knees; Burchard, for the pain of the legs; John the Evangelist and Benedict, for poisons; Petronilla, for fevers; Anthony and Benedict, for the erysipelas; Leonard, looks after captives and prisoners; Margret, women in labour; Anna, the poor; Vincent and Arnold, things lost and stolen; Mark and Barbara, preserve from sudden and unhappy death; Florian, &c. cure barrenness; Agatha, presides over fires; Nicholas, tempests; Jodoc, the hoar-frost; John and Paul, over hail; Barbara, thunder and lightning; Genevieve, drought; and so of the rest.

applied unto. Nay, salvation temporal and eternal was expected from an image, pieces of old wood or rusty nails, girdles, cords, cowls and rags; and prayers and adoration addressed to them accordingly *. In all things requests were to be made to something else than God; and for every blessing enjoyed, some other object must still be praised. What time or room was left for remembering the Deity, and duly honouring him, amidst such a multitude of idols? A multitude so vast, that a man throughout his whole lifetime, though he had employed himself in nothing else, could hardly have said a prayer to each of them; nor could one of a thousand have been capable of learning their several

* Veronica, or the napkin in which the image of our Saviour's face is supposed to be impressed, is thus adored, "O holy face printed on a white cloth, given in sign of love, cleanse us from vice, and join us to society with the blessed: O holy image cause us to see the face of Christ: O thou happy figure, be thou to us a safe shelter." In the consecration of an image to the Virgin, they pray, "Sanctify, O God, this image, that it may bring saving health to thy faithful people,—that immoderate rains, and floods and civil wars, and invasion of heathens, may at the presence of this be suppressed." The crucifix and other relics belonging to Christ, are to be worshipped with the same worship which is due to the Holy Trinity, according to the doctrine of the Antichristian Church, Bonacina says, "De fide esse adorandum signum crucis adoratione latriæ sicut adorantur spinæ, clavi, præsepe, et aliæ reliquie quæ Christum tetigerunt." *Tom. 2. disp. 3. quest. 1.* So Anrad. *Orthod. Expl. l. 9.* and *Rhem. Annot. in Heb. 11.* To the cross, they speak thus, "Thou sweet wood which bearest the nails, &c. save this present company assembled to-day for thy praise."—"Hail, O cross, our only hope in this time of passion, increaseth the grace of the pious, and blot out the faults of the guilty:—and let all say, hail! O salvation of all people, O tree that bringest salvation:" at the same time the priest and others, on bended knees fall down and adore it. *Brev. Rom. in fest. Invent. & exalt. crucis.* To the spear, they pray, "Hail! O triumphant iron, wound us with the love of him whom thou didst pierce."—To the girdle of our Lady; "O blessed girdle, make us inheritors of eternal life, and keep our present life from destruction; O pure girdle, preserve thine heritage; let us have thee to be our strength and our aid, our wall and our defence, our haven and saving refuge."—To the scapulary bestowed by Mary on Simon Stock, and worn by that fraternity, they ascribe such virtue, that whoever wears it, though he were cast into the sea bound hand and foot, he would not be drowned, and when he dies, he shall be secured from the flames of hell. To the wearing of the cord of St Francis, the greatest privileges are annexed: To the fraternity who wear it, after it has been duly blessed and consecrated, was granted by a papal bull, a full and entire pardon of all sins, and exemption from all censures and pains whatever. Nor does another order less venerate the leathern girdle, whereby their fraternity is distinguished. The table-cloth said to have been used at the celebration of the Paschal Supper, is thus invoked, *Sanctissima Dei mappa ora pro nobis.* So also the napkin, *Sancte Sudari ora pro nobis.* Not only the wounds of Christ, but those of Francis have been adored,

Vulnera quæ propter Christum Franciæ tulisti
Illa precor nostris sint medicina malis.

ral qualities, rank and offices, or so much as calling them all by their names *.

Such, O Protestants, is the tendency of an antiscriptural devotion! Such have been the memorable fruits of religious commemorations! Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate; touch not the unclean thing. What fellowship hath the temple of God with idols?

“What,” some will say, “must all that observe festivals then be charged with idolatry? Can none celebrate this or any anniversary without association with idolaters?” No such charge is meant to be insinuated. There are many gradations to be passed through, from the first practices which may furnish the occasions, or prepare the way for it, before people arrive at idolatry. There are some practices which may have been grossly abused, even to idolatry, and may have some remote and accidental, though no necessary connection with it, which some may go into or retain, while they have the greatest abhorrence of all idolatry, and are guarding as far as possible against the abuses. There may even be an apparent conformity to the superstitious and idolatrous in some external acts, where there is no conformity in the intention, nor any approbation of them in the heart. On this account, we ought to make a great difference between the primitive and also the Protestant celebrators of festivals, and the Romish idolaters. There are some, we doubt not, who keep annually a certain number of holidays, and think they do God good service, whom we may fairly exculpate from the charge, or the smallest suspicion of worshipping the creature, though they cannot be altogether exculpated from the superstitious observation of times. This apology we would charitably extend, even to such of the Reformed as yet celebrate days expressly instituted in memory of saints, or in honour of angels, while in their doctrine and intention they expressly disclaim any religious worship of the creature, as they uniformly appear to do, professing

* Some writers testify, that in the city of Rome more than 300,000 martyrs lie buried: So Jacob. Marchant in *Opusc. Pastoral*. The cemetery of Callisti alone, he says, contains 80,000: “And, if in one city, there are so many thousands, how many must there be throughout the whole world?” In the litanies of all the saints, published at Antwerp by authority in 1621, the names of the saints to be called upon every day of the year, one with another, amount to about 5000 *per* day. In some of the kalendars, the number of the domestic saints only are computed to be no less than 44,000. But the whole list of the adorable saints in general, as collected from the Jesuit Bolland, arises to the immense number of 1,007,000.

professing that such days are not consecrated to the honour of the saints whose names they bear, but to God alone * ; and allowing no formal invocation of them in the services of these days. Yet there is a great difference in respect of conformity, and a dangerous tendency to idolatry, in the celebration of festivals appointed for commemorating saints or angels, and those who have no relation to any creature whatever. Whatever be the intention or avowed doctrine of those who keep the former, the act itself can hardly be freed from an idolatrous import. The very consecration of a religious solemn day, in honour of any creature, is in itself a sort of indirect and constructive worship, and so a species of idolatry †.

But it will be alleged, " That there is no such appearance of evil or danger in the present case, the day being appointed as a solemn thanksgiving to God alone for his benefits, and not in memory of any mortal." It is true, this is the express and avowed design, even as it is where days commemorating saints are kept. But the primary design of such institutions have not usually been carefully adhered to. Even when they have been apparently as innocent, as well intended, and as well guarded, yet have they soon been practically perverted. There is always danger, when commemorating remarkable events and benefits, of forgetting the Divine Author of them, and of giving at least some portion of the honour and praise to the second causes,

* In the law passed in England in 1552, it was declared, " That no days were to be esteemed holy in their own nature :—and that days were to be dedicated only to the honour of God, even those in which the saints are commemorated."

† " Sic argumentari videtur Tilenus, non invocant sanctos illos in precibus; ergo non sunt idololatræ. Non sequitur. Nam possunt coli aliis modis, quam invocatione. Nam si dies ipse sit in eorum honorem sacra- tus, et liturgia etiam purissima prædicandis eorum laudibus actisque com- memorandis die illo solenni accommodetur et canetur coluntur ipsi sancti, cultu religioso. At Angli hoc modo sanctorum dies festos observant.— At dices, non in cultum, sed in memoriam martyrum dies istos observare, Deum autem colere in sanctis aut propter sanctos. Non possunt ista duo, celebrare diem in memoriam, et celebrare in cultum, separari. Nam si finis celebrationis sit memoria sanctorum, finis etiam est honor sanctorum. At honor sanctorum celebris et cum solennitate diei festi qui Deo soli debetur, est cultus religiosus.—Et si eo die colitur Deus, tamen celebratio dei instituta est propter sanctum non propter Deum." Cald. *Alt. Dam.*
 " Cum pontificii aiunt dies illos Deo ab Ecclesia Rom. dici propter sanctos sive in sanctorum memoriam, objectum crimen non deluunt, sed ejus atrocitatem augent. Nam si propter sanctos instituitur hic cultus major eorum quam dei ratio habetur, si verum est illud pervulgatum, propter quod unumquodque est tale, illud est magis tale." Tilen. *in ibid.*

causes, and the human instruments, more especially when their hand or virtues have been conspicuous in effecting them, and when they are considered as great and popular characters. Who will say that there is no danger of this sort with regard to the Revolution to be commemorated? Is there not a popular character, and a hero in the case, whose memory we wish to call blessed? It is a certain fact, that the anniversary fasts and festivals hitherto appointed and observed in Britain, relating to public transactions therein, have been chiefly employed to extol or vilify certain characters or parties in the land, according to the part they severally acted in the joyful or tragical events of these days. They have been spent either in fulsome flattery and panegyric, or in equally bitter invectives and curses against others. Whatever the more religious or judicious may propose by this Commemoration, it is not to be doubted, but that something of this kind will mix with the religious adoration of the day. Instead of the name of God alone, I am afraid the name and praises of some mortal, or mortals, will resound in his temple. Though it be not directly consecrated to the memory of a man, yet, without great straining, it may be considered as indirectly so: At least, in the event, it will probably be the same as if it were. Though we are not much in the humour of dubbing more saints, or celebrating the memory of martyrs, ancient or modern, of our own land, or any other; though we may not be inclined to open the tombs, to enshrine the bones, or venerate the ashes, or even the virtues of our Wislarts, our Guthries, our Waristons, or our Cargils; we may think it not quite so unmanly, so unphilosophic, so Popish, to exalt a princely benefactor to the skies, who prosperously advanced at the head of an army to save his country. May we not for once be allowed to rank such an one with Hercules, with Theseus, Achilles, Romulus, or the Cæsars? If so, may not this be a promising prelude to hero-worship? If such be the spirit or the fruit of this Commemoration, wherein will it greatly differ from a day sacred to the memory of a saint, except that it proposes to substitute a political hero, in the room of an antiquated ecclesiastical saint? But if men are to be admitted to share in the honour of holidays, and to be commemorated solemnly in the services of the Church at all, I see no good reason why we should quarrel with those who have been, from time immemorial, in possession. Events more properly religious and divine are ful-

ly as interesting to the Church, as those that are secular and political, as this Revolution properly is, and as such belongs rather to the civil government or commonwealth, to be celebrated in their own way. The virtues and the acts of the Apostles and champions of the Christian faith, are fully as consonant to the business, and conducive to the edification of Christian assemblies, as those of any kings, conquerors or statesmen whatever. To canonize these, after the other have been discarded, may not have such a good appearance. It may give malicious people occasion to say, that we have degraded Christ, his Apostles and saints, from their wonted honour, in order to substitute in their room demi-gods, newly sprung up, whom our fathers knew not.

But if we will not allow this day to have any respect to the memory of a man, as the ancient nations deified certain virtues and qualities, are we in no danger of losing remembrance of the Divine Benefactor, in an excessive value for, and joy in the benefit, and so of falling into the error more refined, of keeping a day sacred to Liberty? There is scarce a blessing in human life, or a name in human language, so sweet as *Liberty*. May we not be tempted to say of it, as the poet of Fortune,

—————*Sed te*
Nos facimus, fortuna, Deam, cœloque locamus. JUV.

The Romans made her a divinity, and had temples consecrated to her. Let us take heed lest we prostitute divine institutions, and offer up the incense and sacrifice of our thanksgivings to this ideal popular idol. In the language of personification, has not this a thousand times been already invoked? Has she not been often described as a kind of invisible genius, angel or guardian, who, taking her flight from other lands, has graciously fixed her favourite residence in the British isles? Has she not been considered as the source of our happiness, showering down her gifts and blessings with a liberal hand? The high strained compliments which British poets and rhetoricians have lavished upon her, fall very little short of that unbounded and idolatrous adulation which was addressed to her, perhaps with as little solemnity or seriousness, by her votaries of old. Who would wish to see the Pulpit, or its chaste and sacred language thus scandalously profaned?

C H A P.

C H A P. IX.

Distinction of Times.—The Vanity of Ancient and Modern Superstition in this Respect.—Stated Anniversaries give Countenance to it.—The Appointment of the Day for commemorating the Revolution, liable to this Objection.

“FOR every purpose under the sun,” said Solomon, “there is a time:—and he hath made every thing beautiful in its season.—A wise man’s heart discerneth both time and judgment.” There are times marked out by nature for certain purposes; others by positive institution; while others are left to be determined by the discretion and free choice of mankind. Whatever the Governor of the world has left undetermined by natural, moral, or positive laws, must be considered as of the latter kind. Nor ought any restrictions to be laid on the freedom of men, in regard of the choice and employment of time, either by previous resolutions, vows or acts of their own, or by the authority of others, in a state of society civil or religious, farther than may be conducive to the better regulation and application of time, the maintaining of order, and the readier attaining the beneficial purposes of society. Where nothing of this can be pled, all restraints laid upon the power of choice in future, by determining the performance of certain works to certain times, in an appointed series and long succession, though at their first proposition they may appear wise and proper, in the observation they will usually be found incommodious and grievous, and in religion especially of hurtful tendency. It is like putting on fetters which cannot be easily loosed, and afterwards may gall: It is laying snares to entangle mens consciences: It is to furnish occasion for a multitude of scruples and fears, where no cause for them previously existed, and to create factitious crimes and artificial impieties.

The voice of nature and Christianity teaches, that all days are to be reputed alike, as well as all meats: and when no divine commandment intervenes, to constitute a distinction, no preference is due to one above another for religious works: Nor can secular works be unfuitable or unlawful upon one day more than another. Though individuals

viduals and societies may be at liberty to desist from ordinary lawful work on certain days, and employ them in whole or in part in such religious exercises, as the present condition and circumstances require; yet to turn occasional acts into stated, or to suppose that their present choice or present use, of such a portion of time, can change a common to an holiday, or render the religious use of it necessary, or ordinary lawful work unlawful upon it, in other times or circumstances, is unwarranted. Because a certain hour, day, month or year may be most fit and seasonable for performing certain exercises for once; it doth not follow, that it will be so when it again recurs, or even be equally so with some others. The consideration of convenience and order must determine what day is most eligible, and not any quality inherent in the day, or its having been formerly so employed, by us or others, or on account of its having been formerly chosen by God for performing some notable works upon it. Nothing of this constitutes any abiding or inherent fitness, or transmits any holiness to a future period of time, corresponding to it in the ordinary methods of computation among men. To observe a day religiously under the notion of its divine obligation when none exists, or of some preference due to it, when there is none in reality, is that weak scrupulosity of mind, from which the fuller knowledge of the doctrine and liberty of the gospel sets consciences free. This has not only prohibited a superstitious observation of the times and customs of the heathen, but has even forbidden the retaining those distinctions of days, which by divine precept had formerly been settled for peculiar and temporary purposes. It is the same in respect of times as of places: To annex the idea of sanctity to any of them, or to suppose that prayers, or any acts of religion, derive any more solemnity or acceptableness, from being done in one time or place, rather than in another, is a most vain and groundless imagination.

Time is a circumstance belonging to creatures and their actions. It is ordained for the use of man, and for the sake of the works to be performed; and works are not to be appointed and performed merely for the sake of the time. It is an undue regard of one time above another, when a work for which there was no peculiar call or reason arising from the nature of it, or which would not have been reckoned necessary or expedient at other times, though equally convenient, is proposed and performed on a certain day and time

time, in order to distinguish and honour it, or in order to recommend and honour the religious work, either in the sight of God or men, from its connection with that time. To suppose a religious connection between certain works or times, when there is none, or a real relation betwixt them, when it is purely ideal, or the effect of custom, is no small absurdity in religion. This is the case when the supposed connection or relation, solely arises from mere arbitrary and artificial modes of dividing or reckoning time. Some divisions and computations of time have their foundation in nature, and are fixed and marked out by the periodical motions and regular returns of the heavenly bodies, as months and years are. Others, again, are wholly artificial, being regulated according to the fancy or modes of particular nations: Some of them containing longer and others shorter periods, usually formed by the division or multiplication of the natural and fixed periods. Of this kind is the computation of ages, which have varied exceedingly in respect of duration, in different times and places of the world. But neither natural nor artificial distinctions of times have any import or consequence in religion, farther than as they are of use in all the affairs and transactions of human life. Nothing can be more chimerical than to suppose, that any real connection or peculiar relation betwixt any two distant portions of time, or the events of them, can result from any agreement or similarity in the artificial numbers or dates, whereby they may happen to be distinguished in the revolving circle of computed time. The arithmetical or astronomical notations, being the same or analogous, constitutes no more relation between a past period, and a remote posterior one, than between the former of them, and that day, month and year immediately succeeding it, nor even so much: Nor can the mere recurring of such figures and dates, make the works performed, either by God or men, on the former period, more interesting, or more the immediate and seasonable objects of consideration on the latter period, than upon any day or year that has intervened betwixt them. To be determined in the actions of religion, by the operation of mere fancy; or to consider as special and urgent calls of Divine Providence, what is only the result of human art; or to have a dependence on a non-entity for producing certain effects or influence, is the true character of superstition.

The superstitious of all religions, have had their *dies fasti* et *nefasti*, and their lucky and unlucky times, as well as omens. Some they have considered, as favourable to certain works, and others as equally improper and unfortunate, for which they could never assign any good reason. On some they would have trembled to think of ploughing or sowing, or going to battle, or undertaking a journey, or marrying, or taking a medicine, or doing any thing of importance in life, while on others they would engage in them with the utmost alacrity, and with the highest confidence of success. Before they can be determined to engage in any enterprize, they must previously consult the kalendar, the diviner, or the stars*. The Pythagoreans and

* The Romans had their *dies praeliæ*, in which they thought it lawful to engage in any acts of hostility. There were others which had the name of *dies atri*, which were deemed unfortunate: the next day after the kalends, nones or ides was always reckoned of this sort, because, it is said, they had taken notice for several ages that those days had proved unlucky to the state in the loss of battles, towns or other casualties: The day before the 4th of the kalends, nones or ides were also reckoned unfortunate, for what reason is unknown, unless on account of the great overthrow at Cannæ having happened on that day. Aul. Gell. *Noct. Attic.* l. 5. c. 17.

Xenocrates, as quoted by Plutarch, speaks of unlucky days and festivals which were celebrated by scourgings, beatings, lamentations, fastings, ill-boding words and obscene expressions, which, though not agreeable to the good demons, yet were held to be pleasing to certain cross and malignant beings in the air, who, by these means, were propitiated. Plut. *de Iſid.*

The Pagan Indians in general, are deeply impressed with the notion of fortunate and unfortunate days. The Japanese keep a table or kalendar of these several days, the work of one of their famed astrologers; and every family has one of them hung up in the passage leading from the door into their houses, to put them in mind of the day when they go out. The same profound sage, to alleviate a little their terrors, invented a charm or preservative comprised in one verse, for the benefit of those whose narrow circumstances obliged them to work on unlucky days for the support of their families. They believe, that whoever repeats this in a proper manner, on the morning of an unlucky day, will be preserved from all the evils that would otherwise attend him. The inhabitants of Madagascar expose such children as happen to be born on Tuesday, Thursday or Saturday; or in the month of April or in Lent, in the 8th day of the moon, or in any hour over-ruled by a malignant planet. They watch the proper times for erecting their houses, cutting down their timber, covering their roofs, and when the building is finished, they wait for the moon, and some propitious hours for the consecration of it, which is done with abundance of ceremonies.

A certain synod in the East, anciently prohibited Christians from retaining the traditions of the Gentiles, in observing the course of the elements, moon or stars, or the vain fallacies of signs in building houses, sowing corn, in planting trees, or solemnizing marriages; declaring it unlawful to observe kalends, or to addict themselves to heathenish festivals and delights; to deck their houses with laurel, ivy or the like, or to observe and use spells and ceremonies in gathering medicinal herbs, as practised among heathens.

Yet

and Platonists have subtilly philosophized about the differences and hidden powers of numbers: While whimsical astrologers have talked of the influences of the heavens, and consulted their horoscopes to read favourable or adverse aspects and conjunctions of the planets. All such notions are with the sensible part of mankind exploded; and they can tend only to distress and enslave mankind; to fill them with vain fears, or, equally groundless and chimerical hopes and joys.

It is not impossible, but that certain times may appear critical either way to individuals or to societies: On certain days of the month or year, a man may have experienced memorable incidents in his life; or, at a period regularly recurring, observant persons may have found remarkable events befalling kingdoms once, twice, or oftener. History and biography have furnished us with different instances of this. The Ides of March were thus critical to Julius Cæsar; the 10th of September to Cromwell; the 29th of May to Charles II. who, in the preamble to the royal act for solemnizing that day, takes notice of this circumstance. And I need not put the reader in mind, that the 5th of November has, twice at least, been marked with signal deliverances to Britain; and the year 88th, for two centuries successively, have been in the same manner distinguished. But are we therefore to suppose, that the Divine Providence, in its grand and free operations, is regulated by a regard to human distinctions and designations of times. Are its events prosperous or adverse, are the lots of men, and the fates of kingdoms affixed to these, or suspended upon them? Or are we hence warranted to expect events of the same nature with the former, or any extraordinary events at all, upon the monthly, annual, decimal or centesimal revolution of such times, or on account of the accidental conjunction of certain Arabic figures. Would not this

Yet this superstition in various branches hath diffused itself far and wide among ignorant and freakish Christians. On the days of certain festivals, as that of Paul's conversion, if it rains, or if the sky appear serene, they promise themselves serenity, fertility, plenty, or want of wine, or a continued rain for so many days, according to the distich;

Clara dies Pauli bona tempora denotat anni. Herbs are gathered on St John's day for producing certain effects. Trees are planted or grafted on Annunciation-day; horses bled on the feast of St Stephen, and so of others; "*Naturalem causam attendentes,*" says one, "*quæ nulla est: sed et festa sic potius inhonorant quam colunt.*" Monday, St Magdalene's day, &c. in like manner have been considered as unlucky days: and others, as possessing the contrary quality. Surins; Dalrio, l. 3. par. 3.

this be as childish and chimerical as to believe in the magical virtue of numbers and talismans, or in the astrological influence of the stars? In some of these instances referred to, were not these supposed critical times accompanied with very opposite events? At one time marked with victory, and the next with murder and death? If on such uncertain grounds, blind and credulous mortals should look for light, behold he may turn it into darkness; and if they prognosticate peace, he may turn it into the shadow of death? How can they know before hand, whether the divine Disposer of events, who will do all his pleasure, shall appoint for them beauty or ashes upon these returning seasons; or whether instead of joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, he may not call them to wailing and girding with sackcloth? With what propriety then can they predetermine an anniversary, either joyful or mournful? Is not the institution of such a feast, a presumptuous anticipation of future joy; like that of the festivalists of old; who said, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant." Is it not saying, in effect, next year, or next century, shall be as the past or the present, returning still with accumulating blessings? Does not this favour more of security and carnal boastings, than of religious gratitude or joy, which is always joined with trembling. "But go to, ye that say, "to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain: "whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow." Or if such festivity or thanksgivings may be supposed proper, in respect of the memory of past favours, however calamitous the circumstances may prove in the time set for the anniversary-commemoration; is not this still attempting to confound those beautiful distinctions which both nature and religion point out? It is an attempt, in spite of all that Providence may be doing to the contrary, to make rejoicing beautiful, not in its own season, but in the season of mourning; or an attempt to drown the cry of present rods, and the sorrowful sense of present evils, by the recollection of mercies long since past, and perhaps now no longer enjoyed. This is like applying vinegar to the teeth, or like one that singeth songs to a heavy heart. It has much the appearance of a person congratulating his friend upon his marriage, after he has become a widow; or like the message of condolence which the inhabitants of Ilium thought proper to send to Tiberius on the death of his father

ther Augustus, a long time after he was dead; to whom the Emperor suitably replied, " And I also am sorry for " your heaviness, having lost so valiant a knight as Hector " in the siege of Troy;" though he had been slain above a thousand years before.

To the inconveniencies and absurdities above mentioned, are anniversary appointments usually liable. An undue distinction of times belongs to the nature of them, either as the previous reason of the appointments, or as the result of them. With respect to that under consideration, the work seems to be enjoined for the sake of the time, rather than the time chosen in order to the work: For as to the work itself, we heard nothing of the necessity and urgent reasons for it, until the arrival of this present year, nor will we, after it is elapsed, probably soon hear of them again: As if something uncommonly weighty and indispensibly urgent really lay in the return of a 5th of November, in the year marked 88th, at the precise distance of a century from the Revolution to be commemorated. Already is that day and year looked on as fortunate to Britain, and the numbers, by which they are designed, are become lucky, because of a providential and accidental coincidence of these with some favourable events in time past. I have known some so impressed herewith, that on no better ground, they have been ready to prognosticate some great revolution in the course of this present year. But how puerile, unphilosophical and whimsical is this! It was just on such frivolous reasons that the Pagans built their *dies atri*. Though the vulgar, or even the learned, may be allowed to amuse themselves or others, at times, with such flattering, though air-built speculations, to fill up a gap in conversation; yet it is surely far below the dignity of an Ecclesiastical court, to appear to be influenced by such a vulgar whim. Can any peculiar obligation to the duty enjoined, arise from the circumstance referred to, natural, moral or religious? What is there in this to constitute a rational and providential call to solemnise the said year and day above all others within the round of the century? We should have good reason for what we do in the solemn worship of God. A learned and reverend body should have something real, and not ideal, to satisfy themselves and others, as to the propriety of sanctifying a day, and calling a solemn assembly. But what new emergent, or new circumstance in the dispensations of God, has appeared, to render such a thanksgiving a present and seasonable

sonable duty this year, more than it was last year, or than it may be the next.

If it be pled, " That the long continuance of the blessing of legal government and freedom, and the maintenance of the Protestant religion to this present time, is the real ground, and a new occasion." If this had been given, in conjunction with other things, as the avowed and special reason of thanksgiving, without being proposed in the commemorative form, and without any limited retrospect to a transaction over a century ago, the appointment would have been less exceptionable; as it might then have been considered as falling within the ordinary rule. But if this had been indeed the proper design of it, it would have been very improper to have fixed the commencement of these invaluable blessings, so long enjoyed, in the year of the Revolution; and equally improper to have left unmentioned other memorable interpositions of later date: And in this case, it would have been as improperly termed a commemoration of the Revolution, as of a multitude of other events and deliverances before or since. Besides, such a thanksgiving would be found equally suitable, seasonable and necessary on any other year or day, as that now selected for it. But who will say that is a just representation of the design and real nature of this act?

It may be further pled, " That as the General Assembly have not, by their authority, appointed the 5th of November to be observed as a day of thanksgiving in all time coming, either annually, or once in a century; therefore it may be considered as an ordinary occasional thanksgiving, and very different from an anniversary festival." It is true indeed, they have not expressly indicted it in the arrogant and irrevocable style of the See of Rome, or in the no less despotic language of the Stewart-monarchs, as of James I. when he emitted the strange edict for observing a yearly thanksgiving in commemoration of his deliverance from the Gowry conspiracy, and of his grandson, when he appointed the anniversary of what was called his happy restoration, both of them enjoining, that the respective days shall be celebrated in the same manner *for ever*: But it was long before either Ecclesiastical or temporal rulers durst venture avowedly to exercise such a stretch of power. Had the Assembly either without, or in conjunction with the authority of the civil magistrate, openly assumed that tone over the Church of Scotland, it must
either

either have been treated with laughter, or it would soon have caused a general and more serious alarm through the nation: As there is no law, sacred or civil, empowering any of them, or both of them in conjunction, to impose such ridiculous and unreasonable observances on the people of Scotland. But though they had more wisdom than to proceed to such an extreme all at once, yet they have gone as far as their power can reach, according to the constitution, if not beyond it. What they have done may have full as much authority and force to secure the observation of it in ages to come, as if they had enacted it *in perpetuam rei memoriam*, with all the parade of *we will*, and *we command* the generations to come, as well as the present. They have given an example, which others may not fail to make use of, and to improve upon. And the nature and reasons of their present deed are such, as must equally determine the duty and the day to posterity, when placed in similar circumstances. If there is any force in the reasons for the present observation of this solemnity, it may be presumed, that in times to come, instead of being lessened, it will rather increase. Is it meant as a commemoration? To answer this intent, it must surely be something permanent, and periodically recurring. The memory of any thing cannot be effectually preserved merely by an occasional, a single, and a transient act. A continued or repeated celebration of the day therefore, in the nature of the thing, must be supposed, otherwise the intent is lost: and commemoration will become more needful, in proportion as the event commemorated becomes remote. Whether these solemn times of commemoration shall recur at the end of every year, or every five, fifty or a hundred years, makes no essential difference. Again, is the long continuance of the blessings secured by the Revolution a good reason at present? If these shall continue for another century longer, it will then become a better one. Farther, if the recurring of the fortunate number 88, in the present century, naturally points out the fittest time, and constitutes a sufficient providential call to us, it must surely deserve the same regard, and call to the same exercise, whenever it appears in the almanack again. Nay then some Pythagorean or Rosycrucian philosopher, or some sage mystic or cabbalistic divine, well versed in the profound mysteries of numbers, will not fail to remark the superior effect of three 8hts combined. If the critical junction of two of them shed such a propitious influence on Britain,

tain, and calls for a solemn jubilee, what may the triple union be supposed to produce? It must render that a more distinguished and solemn epoch. Posterity therefore must either be incapable of penetrating into the meaning, or of feeling the force of our reasons, or else they must consider themselves as obliged in the same manner to commemorate; that is, continue and confirm this as a perpetual secular festival; so far at least as any of the same kind can be properly called, or have any probability of becoming perpetual.

It also deserves consideration here, that by far the greater part of the fasts and festivals which have pestered the Church at first, began in voluntary acts, and gradually grew into a custom, before they were established as laws, or imposed as necessary, by any authority whatever. Hence the great difference there was, for a long time, as to their number, their duration, and the time and manner of their celebration. But one pious act was followed by other pious acts; and the example of one age made way for the example of a succeeding age, till they were so settled by usage, that men of an imposing spirit had little more to do than give them their sanction, and turn them into ordinances to stand for ever. Already they wore the face of venerable antiquity, and had acquired some degree of stability, and wanted nothing but the form of a human commandment or institution. These usually form themselves upon some ancient and respectable custom, received by tradition from our fathers, which acquires still the more awful and venerable appearance, according to the distance at which it is seen, and the longer mankind have been inured to the acts of religious observation: and one human institution, once admitted, is sufficient to draw a thousand after it. To adopt the words of a modern writer: "The Christian mode of divine worship is a course of action, founded on positive commands, and wholly regulated by them; and on this ground we reject every thing in divine worship, not commanded. For example, we ask why Christians celebrate Easter, and keep Lent, and fasts and festivals? The incorporating of these rites into the religion of Jesus originated somewhere. They are no parts of the moral law,—they are no where positively instituted by Jesus Christ,—they are therefore human traditions to us, and they were human institutes to our ancestors, who appointed them. The damage done to religion by the sign of the cross in baptism,

" baptism, does not so much lie in two strokes of a priest's finger, as in previously admitting the destructive principle on which it is grounded. Before I can add any ceremony to a positive institute, I must necessarily affirm my right of religious legislation. Now this principle once admitted, Popery follows *."

C H A P. X.

Of significative and mystical Days.—Symbolical Worship.—Sensible Memorials.—Theatrical and mimical Ways of celebrating certain Festivals.

TIMES of religious observation become still more suspicious and liable to greater objection, when they are chosen or appointed as being more significant, and as assistant to the exercises to be performed upon them, by representing more lively the object, or reviving the remembrance of the events to which these times are by human institution made to relate. In this respect they may be considered as a species of symbolical worship, and flow from the same principle with that which opened the door for all the train of absurd rites, and mystical ceremonies of human device, which so entirely overwhelmed the worship of God, and which, in process of time, introduced the grossest acts, not only of mental, but of external idolatry. When the various kinds, the surprising progress, and the dangerous nature of this are reflected on, what good Christian but must tremble at any thing that may tend, in the remotest manner, to establish a principle fraught with such pernicious consequences? That any man or church on earth has a power to appoint significative rites and ceremonies in the worship of God, is a position that deserves for ever to be execrated among the rest of the horrid brood which Antichrist hath produced. The same may be said of the appointment of symbolical and mystical times, which go hand in hand with the other. Such doctrine should pass current no where but in spiritual Babylon, who bears visibly inscribed the title of *Mystery*: than which nothing can be more descriptive of the nature of her religious service, being

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* *Essay on Compos. of a Sermon. vol. II. p. 284, &c.*

ing apparent in every branch of it, and in all relating to it. The number of symbolical things, and of mystical rites and acts, under her dominion, multiplied so much, that neither learned nor unlearned could pretend to explain them, nor could an inventive genius easily hit upon a new one. It was found necessary at last to establish a congregation expressly for this purpose; which was accordingly done by Sextus V. and called, *the Congregation of Rites*, appointed more especially to invent and regulate the religious ceremonies that are to be observed in the worship of each new saint that is added to the kalendar. All things became significative and full of mysteries, from the triple crown, and the bishop's throne and pall, to a slipper or a bell-rope *. Such

* Volumes have been filled with their impertinent mystical nonsense. Of this, what one of their rationalists gravely teaches on the subject of a bell, will be a sufficient specimen: " These, says he, are what the silver trumpets were under the law. (Our bells of metal are more sonorous than the ancient trumpets, because God is now known through all the earth, but then only in Judea. They are also stronger and more durable, to show that the preaching of the New Testament shall outlive the trumpets and sacrifices of the law. The bells themselves denote the preachers who call men to the faith.—The aperture of the bell, the mouth of the preacher, according to that of the Apostle, I am become as a sounding brass, and a tinkling cymbal.—The hardness of the metal, the fortitude of the mind of the preacher.—The pendulum or iron tongue that beats on the bell, denotes the tongue of the teacher, which is ornamented with science, and makes both the Old and New Testament to resound, as the clapper strikes both sides of the bell. The striking denotes, that the preacher should first correct himself.—The chain that fastens the clapper, denotes that moderation which restrains the tongue. The wood in which the bell is suspended, is the wood of the Lord's cross; which wood also depends on other wood above it, because the cross was spoken of by the ancient fathers. The pieces by which the wood is bound together, are the oracles of the prophets. The iron band which fastens it to the wood, denotes that charity, by which the preacher, being indissolubly tied to the cross, boasts, saying, God forbid that I should glory, &c. The pin fixed to the wood, by means whereof the bell is rung, is the conscience of the preacher, which being fixed on the commandments by frequent ringing, inculcates them on the ears of the hearers. The rope which hangs down, whereby the bell is pulled, is the humility or the life of the preacher: it is also the figure of the duration of our life. The rope at one end is tied to the wood of the bell,—on which account, it fitly represents the Holy Scripture, which descends from the wood of the cross. Farther, as the rope is composed of three cords, so the Holy Scripture is composed (*ex Trinitate*) of three things, history, allegory and a moral sense. The rope reaches down to the hands, to shew that the Scripture descends from mystery in the mouth of the preacher:—and also, that it should extend even to good works. The rope goes up and down in ringing, so the Scripture speaks sometimes of things high, and sometimes of things low. The Priest draws the rope down when he descends from a contemplative to an active life; as also, when he explains Scripture according to the latter, but it is drawn

Such spiritual meanings were found on every thing, or rather imposed on them, as neither God nor nature ever intended, and what one would think should never have entered into the heart of man to conceive. Persons, garments, actions, gestures, places, colours, numbers, figures, all became mystical. In the celebration of one mass, there are more ceremonies and mysteries, than in the whole course of service in the temple.

For the performance of the different exercises of religion, whether public or private, significant times were chosen, and days and hours were forthwith made also to speak forth mysteries: which strengthened the opinion of their sanctity, and the necessity of observing them, even independent of the authority of the Church enjoining them. This made it necessary to make a number of fasts and festivals fixed, lest the mystery should be lost: hence came in the weekly fasts, which were called *stations*, in allusion to the Roman guards, who watched their several hours: the quadragesimal fast; and the order in which the festivals of Christ and others were settled: though to fix their several times with this view was no easy task, and occasioned no small contest, and manifold inconsistencies and absurdities. From a mistaken interpretation of the words of Christ about fasting when the bridegroom was taken from them, which they took to mean the time between the crucifixion and the resurrection, Christians early began to distinguish the returns of that season by fasting, some one day, some two, some more, and others forty hours: Some beginning from the
time

" drawn up, when he expounds it spiritually. The ring at the end of the cord,
" by which it is pulled, denotes the crown of recompense or perseverance to
" the end: the bell is rung twelve times during the twelve hours of the so-
" lemn days, once at the first, and once in the last, because all things pro-
" ceed from one God alone, who is all, in all. At Tierce, they are rung
" three times.—At Vespers, or the 9th hour, many times, because in the
" season of grace, the preaching of the Apostles is multiplied: So frequently
" in the night until the morning, because the cry must often be repeated,
" awake thou that sleepest, &c. Ordinarily thrice at matins, the first ring-
" ing signifies St Paul preaching charity; the second, Barnabas associated
" with Paul; the third, that the Apostles turned to the Gentiles. Through-
" out Septuagesima, or the ordinary days, *non debet, compulsi, nec depul-*
" *sari, sed impulsari*, i. e. *simpliciter pulsari*; on Sabbaths and holy days,
" to ring as in other times. Because, under the gospel, preachers are more
" numerous and famous, and must be instant in season and out of season;
" therefore, in the feasts which belong to the gospel, the bells tinkle more
" loudly, and sound longer, that they may awaken the sleeper and drunkard."
—But the mystery of bell-ringing is not yet at an end, but the readers pa-
tience, and my own, is so long ago. Dur. *Rationale*, l. i. cap. iv.

time of the agony in the garden; others from the time of Christ being betrayed by Judas: Some, again, from the time of his being nailed to the cross, and others from his being actually dead. They continued their grief till Sunday morning, when they began their joyful feast of Easter or Christ's resurrection, which was the time of finding the bridegroom. This fast of forty hours was converted afterwards into one of as many days; but for this they must devise a new mystery: it was in imitation of the Saviour fasting in the wilderness, and of Moses continuing in the mount: A warm debate soon divided the Christian world, whether the celebration of the memorial of the resurrection should be kept precisely on the day of the month answering to that on which it took place, that is to say, on the third day after the fourteenth, or the Jewish passover; or on the next Sunday after. There was danger of breaking the mystical relation either way, upon supposition of the Sabbath being the weekly festival of the resurrection, the anniversary festival of it, to maintain the analogy of the days, must frequently be divided from it. It was settled at last to be always kept on the Sabbath first following the passover, *as it is this day*. Yet even after receiving the paschal canon of Nice, great variations often took place, owing to the different cycles and modes of computation followed in different countries.

The bishop of Rome ordained, about 311, that none should fast on Thursdays or Sundays, because on a Thursday Christ instituted his last supper, and also ascended. Another Pope, 400 years after, made bold with Thursday, decreeing that in Lent it should be a fast as well as other days. Innocent I. made a constitution, that Saturday should not be fasted, because our Lord rested that day in his sepulchre, which was a token of our future rest in glory, and therefore it was improper to fast on that day. Yet Gregory VII. afterwards decreed that it should be a fast; and for the very same reason too (for they were at no loss to deduce quite contrary conclusions from the same premises), because our Lord lay buried in the sepulchre, and he was persuaded his disciples could not but fast then for sorrow. Sylvester I. is said to have appointed every Friday as a fast in memory of our Lord's passion, and every Wednesday too, because they conceived that Judas on that day, betrayed him. But Honorius III. 900 years after, ordered, that when Christmas happened on a Friday, all men might eat flesh, unless they had vowed the contrary. The
time

time between Easter and Whitfunday is always to be a time of rejoicing; and when certain fasts fall within that time, as the vigils of Philip and James, they are dispensed with. The right time of keeping Christmas has occasioned little less controversy than that of Easter: Many pleading that the nativity was in September, rather than the time on which the feast is usually kept. To this day historians and chronologists are not agreed, either as to the precise day or month on which it is to be fixed. It has accordingly been placed by some in every month of the year:—The Holy Spirit having wisely left this in some obscurity in the sacred canon; as well as omitted any particular accounts of the time of the birth, lives and deaths of the Virgin Mary and the Apostles, foreseeing the superstition that would arise, and no doubt on purpose to confound this folly: Even as God buried Moses, and concealed his sepulchre from the Israelites, lest they should have made an improper use thereof. But when they found it impossible to ascertain the precise days and dates of the several events or mysteries commemorated, which stamped an indelible honour on these days, they were content to settle the same at the discretion of the Church; and they still, though absurdly, considered such days as just and true representatives or symbolical memorials of the original days, and their events. Hence the liturgies, when touching the events or benefits commemorated, speak of them as if still done on these days. As the emphatic words of the mass-monger, *hoc est corpus meum*, is supposed to make the mysterious change of bread into flesh; so the phrase often occurring, “As on this day,” in the commemorative offices, gives the solemn intimation of the mystical relation between the day and the deed, though placed at the distance of a thousand years from each other. This way Christ has continued to be born, circumcised, presented, crucified, and taken up to heaven, annually on some certain day of the year, for a succession of ages; sometimes so little regard has been paid to consistency or common sense, the same individual event has been continued as occurring on several days in immediate succession, when the same services have been ordered to be repeated: As in the Collect for Christmas, in the English service, the following words were ordered to be said for six days together: thou “which hast given us thy only begotten Son, to take our nature upon him, and *this day to be born;*” though the Saviour surely was born but upon one day,

day, whatever that was. The phrase indeed with some difficulty was got altered to its present form, *As at this time*; which has but little mended the matter.

By what authority do any thus constitute certain days to serve for religious signs, or memorials of events past? Who may establish such a relation between these events and their respective days, so that they can be said to belong to them more than to any other day in the circle of the year? May not those who can do this, appoint rites, ceremonies and sacraments to what amount they please? For here is evidently an attempt, so far as human art and authority can go, to bring absent and unseen things present to the mind, through the medium of some present and sensible token, never ordained by God for that end. It is settling a sort of image or representation of certain objects wherewith they are symbolically united, by which the memory is to be assisted, and the affections excited in the worship of God. The use and intent of them as figures and symbols, is apparent from the very names whereby they are designed: Being usually called by the names of the things they signify or represent, as one day is the nativity, another the ascension or epiphany: a bold metonymy like the sacramental language, *this is my body*; *this cup is the New Testament*. How do these days, or a treason, a martyrdom, a restoration or a revolution-day, differ from the mystical days of Papists*. Nay, wherein do they greatly differ in their principle and use from religious pictures, images, relics, votive tables and monuments, crucifixes, crosses and the like; especially as these were at first considered and employed?

Pictures and images were introduced at first with no other view, but as historical monuments, for refreshing the memory, and exciting a livelier devotion; and the most sensible and subtle defenders of them to this day, will allow them to be considered in no other light, and plead for no other

* Bellarmine rightly observes, " Certum est, hos dies, namque Natalis, Pentecostes, Passionis, Resurrectionis, Ascensionis, non servari ratione ordinis et politiz, sed ratione significationis. Nam in primis, si solum, ratione ordinis servarentur temere constituti fuissent. Quis enim est iste ordo, ut inter diem passionis et resurrectionis non sit nisi unus dies medius: inter resurrectionis et ascensionis sint quadraginta? Inter Ascensionem et Pentecostes sint decem; inter Pentecosten et Natale sint plus quam sex menses? Deinde si solum ratione ordinis celebrantur festa, cur sequimur lunam in festibus mobilibus inveniendis? Item cur habent ista nomina, pascha, ascensio, &c. si nihil sacrum significant? Denique patres diserte docent festa ista celebrari ad significanda mysteria redemptionis, et ea externo ritu representanda." *De cultu Sancti. c. 10.*

other than a relative worship as due to them. Even the more intelligent heathens did never look on their images, as any other than symbols or representations of the being to whom they gave divine honours. "They are only books for the ignorant," said Porphyry*. Julian called them, "Symbols of the presence of the gods." The Pagans in Arnobius† deny, that they ever thought their images to be gods, or to have any divinity in them, but what only arises from their consecration to such an use. Maximus of Tyre, in his discourse on the subject, shews, that images were but signs of divine honour, and helps to remembrance‡. The ancient fathers reasoned against them in this view; "What mean their images," says Lactantius, "which either are the monuments of the dead, or absent persons? for, upon this account were these similitudes invented, that the memory of them might be retained, who were either dead, or absent from us: in which of these two orders will you place your gods§?" The idolaters in Cochinchina, the first article of whose religion, consists in paying adoration to the souls of those, who, in their life were distinguished for some meritorious action, have their temples adorned with their images: and, to make them still more significant, some of them are placed high, and others low, much in the same manner as the pipes of an organ. This difference is to denote the different merits of the persons; and according to the height of the image, so are the degrees of worship to be regulated, the short not being treated with so much respect as the tall. Yet their priests hold, that God is invisible by the human eye. Being asked by a Jesuit, why they erected images, seeing they believed in one true God? they replied, That they did not set up images as makers of heaven and earth, but kept them to put them in memory of the virtues of great men, who could hear their prayers, and intercede for them||. The Jesuits in China thought they were under no necessity of obliging their converts to lay aside their images altogether, but to convert them to the honour of other objects, and so melted them down and made new ones of them¶. The ancient Church admitted not of the use of images at all in religion; and when they began to creep

* Euf. *Præp. Evang.* l. 3. c. 7.

† Arnob. *Cont. Gent.* l. 6.

‡ Max. Tyr. *Diff.* 38.

§ "Quid sibi volunt ipsa simulacra quæ aut mortuorum aut absentium monumenta sunt, &c.?" Laët. *de orig. Error.* l. 2. c. 2.

|| Hurd's *Rel. Cerem.* p. 85. 86.

¶ Stillingfleet's *Idol. of the Church of Rome*, p. 86.

creep in, it was under the specious guise of their being lively memorials. About the end of the 4th century, the churches began to be embellished with paintings; chiefly to represent the sufferings of the martyrs, and to render them more respectable to those present. They represented in them also the histories of the Bible, as the sacrifice of Abraham, and the miracles of Christ. They were then but mere pictures; statues not having been admitted into churches till a long time after. They were admitted as historical remembrancers, but not as objects of adoration*. By a statute of Edward VI. in 1547, all Ecclesiastical persons were enjoined to teach their parishioners, that "images served for no other purpose, but to be a remembrance, whereby men may be admonished of the holy lives and conversations of them the said images represent." And therefore, it was as proper and useful to have retained the religious use of them still as of commemorative festivals: from which some Doctors of the Church of England seem not to be greatly averse†.

Crucifixes were also introduced with a similar intent, to represent in a more lively and striking manner the sufferings of Christ. *Agnus dei*, and the use of the cross or the sign of it, upon almost all occasions, and in all things, were grounded on the pretext of their being needful memorials of the Saviour, reminding Christians continually of the benefits resulting from his death, and of the duty they owe to him.

Relics

* "Novi multos esse sepulchrorum et picturarum adoratores? Novi multos esse qui luxuriosissime super mortuos bibant, et epulas cadaveribus exhibentes super sepultos seipsos sepeliant. Nunc vos illud admoneo, ut aliquando Ecclesiæ Catholicæ maledicere desinatis vituperando mores hominum, quos et ipsa condemnat, et quos quotidie tanquam malos filios corrigere studeat." *De morib. Eccl. Cath. l. 1. cap. 34.*

"Et quidem zelum, ne quid manu factum adorari possit, habuisse laudavimus; sed frangere easdem imagines non debuisse judicamus: quatenus literarum nescii haberent unde scientiam historiæ colligerent; et populus in picturæ adoratione minime peccarent." *Greg. Mag. l. 7. Ep. 109.*

The Synod under Stephen, which ordered images to be restored to the churches, after they had been cast out by a former decree, declared the Synod which had condemned them accursed, "because they had rendered the condition of the immortal God, worse than that of men: To set up the statues of mortal men," they say, "who have deserved well of the republic is lawful; as well that we may not seem ungrateful, as that we may be excited to imitate their brave and virtuous actions; and shall it not then be lawful to set up the image of God, whom we ought always, if it were possible, to have before our eyes.

† "We see our church is not for defacing of images, so far as they are only historical monuments, and instruments of remembrance and affection; but against the abuse of them." *Puller's Moder. ch. 9. p. 246.*

Relics were preserved, and pilgrimages made from no other principle, and for no other purpose. In looking on the remains of those whom they meant honourably to remember; in visiting certain altars, tombs, or the scenes where great transactions or holy miracles were done; the devotee beheld, as it were an image of the person, and a memorandum of his virtues beyond mere narration. Sight and fancy operated more powerfully than faith on things merely unseen could do. Hence they became holy haunts; and devotion waxed cold and languid when not performed beside them.

From motives of the same kind, was derived the custom of offering votive tables, and gifts, and keeping them in churches. They were intended as grateful memorials of certain deliverances or benefits received, consecrated to the honour of the deity or saint, to which the offerer supposed himself indebted, and as an incitement to others to honour him. This practice might be an imitation of the Philistines, who made golden emerods and mice, whereby they had suffered, and returned it with the ark: Or it might be borrowed from the ancient Romans, or other nations, who testified their acknowledgment to their gods, after they had escaped any eminent peril, or were cured of some disease, by hanging up in the temple of the god they had vowed to their clothes, or picture, wherein were delineated the evils they were delivered from. "Come goddess, hasten to my aid," cries a Roman poet, "for the many pictures hung up in thy temple, do sufficiently shew that thou hast the power of healing*." Travellers who visit the Popish churches, tell us they are replenished with such memorials of various materials, and of all shapes and figures; and the older writers attest it: "We hang up in the churches," says a Louvain Doctor, "arms, feet and such like things of wax, silver and other materials; others hang up pic-
R tures

* Nunc dea, nunc succurre mihi, nam posse mederi
Picta docet templis multa Tabella tuis.

Tib. l. 1. el. 3.

So Horace,

— Me Tabula facer
Votiva paries indicat humida
Suspendisse potenti
Vestimenta maris Deo.

Horace, l. 1. od. 5.

To this also Juvenal alludes, when he says, "That the painters were sed
" by the goddess Isis."

— Pictores quis nescit ab Isis pasci?

Juv. Sat. 12.

“ tures for a witness of the miracle *.” “ We hang up in
 “ our churches,” says Polyd. Virgil, “ pictures, on which
 “ are painted the miraculous things that have happened to
 “ us, for transmitting the memory of each to posterity.
 “ This comes from the Greeks, as Strabo assures us, among
 “ whom the custom was to hang up in the temples of the
 “ god who had succoured them, and particularly in that of
 “ Æsculapius. They also offered to Saturn and the gods,
 “ small images. We do the like, offering small figures of
 “ wax to the church; for as soon as we are afflicted in any
 “ part of our body, whether in hands, or feet, or breast,
 “ we immediately make a vow to God, and to his saints,
 “ to whom, as soon as we are cured, we offer up such hand,
 “ or foot, or breast, done in wax. This custom is become
 “ so common, that it hath passed from men, to beasts; for
 “ the Christians offer such images in wax, for an ox, a
 “ horse, or a sheep: of which some scrupulous people may
 “ tell us, that we therein imitate the superstition, rather than
 “ the religion of the Pagans, since Cato, in his Treatise of
 “ Agriculture, acquaints us, that the Romans made such
 “ vows for the oxen, which to him appeared the most ridi-
 “ culous thing in the world †.”

X Further, to what are we to ascribe the institution of the
 worship of the Rosary, but to a superstitious fondness for
 significant memorials, and symbolical modes of worship?
 It begins with the Lord's prayer, and three *aves*, to point
 out, they say, the relation which the Virgin bears to the
 persons of the Trinity. The fifteen large beads are the
 symbols of as many mysteries, wherein are pointed out the
 purposes of heaven in the plan of redemption. Of these
 mysteries thus represented on a bead-roll, five are joyful,
 five sorrowful, and five glorious.* The solemnity of the
 Rosary was ordered to be celebrated on the first Sabbath of
 October †.

What

* Molan. *de hist. sac. Im. l. 2. cap. 50.*

† P. Virg. *lib. I. c. I.*

X ‡ So of the *Crown of the Virgin*, a species of the beads, we are told that
 it represents twelve singular prerogatives belonging to her, shadowed out by
 the 12 stars in the revelation; the 12 loaves of shew-bread; the 12 wells at
 Elim; the 12 stones in Aaron's breast-plate, and the 12 fruits on the tree
 of life: “ Corolla, B. V. 12 constat salutationibus angelicis, ad memorandus
 “ 12 singulares ejus prerogativas, seu illustriores privilegiorum stellas, e qui-
 “ bus celeste diadema compactum est, quo vidit eam ornatam B. Johannes in
 “ Apocolypsi, cum mulierem amictam sole vidit, et in capite ejus coronam
 “ stellarum 12. Quæ privilegia 12 quoque panibus propositionis adumbran-
 “ tur, 12 fontibus Elim, 12 lapidibus insertis in altari; 12 lapidibus in veste
 “ pontificis;

What other account can be given of the institution of canonical hours, and the hours of the Virgin; in which certain hours of the day, even as in festivals certain days, are fixed on, and separated for certain religious exercises, in regard to some mystery annexed to them. Certain religious societies, as the Benedictines, are tied down to perform their devotions seven times in the twenty-four hours: 1. At two o'clock in the morning, because Christ is said to have risen from the dead at that time. 2. At six, because then he appeared to the women. 3. At nine, for then Pilate ordered our Saviour to be scourged. 4. At noon, for then he was crucified. 5. At three o'clock, when he expired on the cross. 6. At six in the evening, as the time when he was taken down. Lastly, At seven, as the beginning of his agony. The mysteries of the seven canonical hours are expressed in these monkish rhymes:

Matutina ligat Christum qui crimina purgat:

Prima replet sputis: dat causam *tertia* mortis.

Sexta cruci nectit: latus ejus *nona* bipertit:

Vespera deponit: tumulo *completa* reponit.

Besides the relation these hours have to the seven mysteries of Christ, they also refer to the seven days creation,—to the just falling seven times a-day, and rising again by prayer,—to the perfection of the number seven,—to the evil spirit taking to himself seven worse spirits against us,—to the sevenfold grace of the Spirit,—and to the seven parts in the Lord's prayer. It may be enquired here, says one, why, in order better to unravel this mystery, they did not produce the city with seven hills, and the beast with seven heads, since there is also a mystery in them, Rev. vii. 5.? In like manner, offices have been composed for the service of the Virgin, in which particular addresses or meditations are prescribed for every day of the week; and the canonical hours are dedicated wholly to her memory. In some of them, to preserve a greater variety and distinction, the whole person is not to be addressed at once, but some members of her body are to be worshipped in one day, and some on another*.

The

"pontificis; et 12 fructibus ligni vitæ. Hæc enim beneficia, a filio salvatore, "qui lignum est vitæ ei communicata fuere." Jo. Bourges, *Jes. lib. 2. de bono sodalit. parth. cap. 8.*

* In Stanihurst's *Hebdomeda Mariana in memoriam septem fessorum B. V. M. per singulos hebdomadæ dies distributa*, the salutations for each day are

The same spirit that led men to commemorate past events and objects, by means of consecrated significant days, disposed them also to a theatrical and mimical manner of celebrating them. Days alone of themselves would rather prove dull memorials, without they were enlivened by their ceremonies, whereby the fancy might be aided by more sensible exhibitions of persons, or representations of actions to the eyes, as well as to the ears. And these have never been long wanting, when the other came into repute: and hereby religion has been turned into ludicrous farce, and what were called its solemnities, disgraced with pageantry, indecency and buffoonery. The first who were famed for solemnising festivals, did it always in this pompous and scenical manner; and the same taste has been apparent in their successors. "The Egyptians used more the language of the eyes, than that of the ears, for the vehicle of their heroes praises. Their mode of panegyricizing their deceased benefactors, seems rather to have been a kind of dramatic representation of their services, than a rhetorical description of them. To signify, for example, that Isis was the inventress of bread-corn in Egypt, they used to invoke her every year, over the first reapings of their harvest. And in their devotional solemnities to her honour, they shewed a specimen of the grain she had discovered for them, as the register of their obligations to her upon this account. In the same dramatic turn of thinking, when they celebrated annually the obsequies of Osiris, they carried about a chest, the representation of their hero's coffin, as also certain symbols of husbandry and plantation, to signify his having been the introducer of these useful arts among them. A ceremony which subsisted in the rituals of ancient Paganism to its latest periods; though, when the real intendment of it was thought advisable to be suppressed, it was contrived to resolve

are thus parcelled out.—*Feria 2da*, "Salvete casta B. V. membra—Salvete caput, &c. Salvete oculi—nares—nares—labia."—*Feria 3tia*, "Salve lingua—salvete fauces—salve venerabile pectus—fons sacri pectoris—salve sinus—salvete ulnæ." *Feria 4ta*, "Salvete manus—salve mamma—salvete mamillæ—uberis pura—salve cor purum—venter." *Feria 5ta*, "Salve venter virginis—sacri ventris hospitium—utere virginalis." *Feria 6ta*, "Salve B. V. M. umbilice—salvete virginea viscera inviolata matris—salve claustrum virginei pudoris, quod nascendo servavit Christus. *Sabbatho*, salvete manus—genua—pedes—sanguines—virgineum hospitium corpus." *Dominica*, "Salve corpus sanctum—anima, &c." *Rich. Stanish. Hyber. Princip. Belg. Sacellani hebdom. Marc. ex orthodox. Cath. Rom. Eccles. patribus collecta*, &c. 1609.

“ resolve it into a mystical one. From which dramatic
 “ manner of the Egyptians in the chief offices of their he-
 “ roic worship, it came to pass, that all the capital services
 “ of the ancient heroic superstition in such other Pagan na-
 “ tions as we are best acquainted with, were of the nature
 “ of a religious drama, consisting for the most part of cer-
 “ tain *μυμηματα*, sensible representations of particular more
 “ remarkable passages in the history and adventures of the
 “ patron hero. Of this kind were the rites performed by
 “ the Phœnicians to Adonis and Venus; by the Phrygians
 “ to Attis and Cybele; the Thracians to Bacchus; the
 “ Cretans to Jupiter; the inhabitants of Samothrace and
 “ Lemnos to the Dii Cabiri; and by the people of Sicily
 “ and Attica to the same divine persons, under the more
 “ distinguished appellations of Ceres, Pluto, and Proser-
 “ pine *.”

Apuleius has given a picturesque description of a festival
 procession and exhibition in honour of Diana; “ in which,
 “ some appeared in the equipage of war, and others like
 “ hunters, armed with knives and spears; after came men
 “ disguised like women, magnificently dressed,—a tame she-
 “ bear was carried on a litter, in honour of the goddess,
 “ that being the symbol of hunting; after marched the fe-
 “ male devotees, clothed in white, and crowned with
 “ flowers, wherewith they strewed the way: they also
 “ poured out a precious balm, to perfume the air. A
 “ great croud followed the matrons, with lighted torches
 “ in their hands. There were singing boys, accompanied
 “ with a symphony of instruments. The priests, with sha-
 “ ven crowns, who followed, bore several things consecra-
 “ ted to the use of religion: some carrying the relics of the
 “ gods, and some the altars. Next appeared the gods,
 “ who vouchsafed to walk on the feet of men. Then a
 “ person bearing a box, wherein the mysteries were in-
 “ closed, and which wholly covered the arcana of the mag-
 “ nificent religion. A person next succeeded, carrying in
 “ his happy bosom the venerable effigy of the sovereign
 “ divinity †.” One would think himself here beholding
 a Popish procession, on *Corpus Christi* day, or some great
 festival: in which every art is tried to heighten the pomp,
 and to render the mysteries of these days more visible and
 palpable

* Coventry's *Hist. of Fal. Rel.* p. 283, &c.

† Apul. *lib.* II.

palpable to the senses. Altars, churches *, and streets are decorated. Images, and other consecrated implements of devotion brought forth in abundance. All sorts of persons, animals and actions are realized: Some are exhibited in dumb shew, and others are speaking and acting figures, according to the character they represent. Jesters, players and mimics outdo the priests in the celebration of sacred mysteries. One day they carry palm branches, and plant them; on another they scatter holy ashes. Sometimes the principal mystical figure is a courtesan, sometimes a monk riding on an ass. Sometimes merry, sometimes doleful music is heard, or no music at all. "In the pomp of our processions," says an author more than once quoted, "it is usual to have some pleasantries go before, as files of soldiers, foot and horse; some figures of ingenious contrivance for ridicule; such particularly, as open a wide frightful mouth, and make a clattering noise with their teeth. The Prophets are personated: one acts David, another Solomon. Others are habited as queens. Artificial wings are tied to children, and the children are made to sing †." In the procession of Good Friday, at which all sorts of people assist, with lanthorns in their hands, twelve crosses are carried by so many fraternities; after these appears a man representing Jesus, in a Nazarene gown, with a crown of thorns on his head, and a heavy cross on his shoulders; and another, representing Simon, helps him to bear it. When the procession sets forward, a song of the passion is sung: When they advance to the first cross or station, they stop, and the preacher makes an exhortation, telling what our Saviour suffered at that step; and so on, till they arrive at the twelfth, at which the sermon of the passion is preached, before they return. In some places, on the feast of Assumption, the image of the Virgin

* The Churches, altars and ministers change their ornaments according to the time and the nature of the solemnity. There are five principal sacred colours: *White*, for the mysteries of our Saviour, feasts of the Virgin, angels, saints and confessors: *Red*, for the mysteries of the sacrament, feasts of the apostles and martyrs: *Green*, for the time between Pentecost and Advent, and from Epiphany to Septuagesima: The *Violet*, is for Advent and Christmas; for vigils, rogations and votive masses in time of war: The *Black*, for the dead, and the services and ceremonies thereto belonging. On Easter-Eve, the ornaments of the Churches are changed from black to white before mass is celebrated: On the gospel side of the altar, a large candlestick in form of an angel is set to hold the paschal candle, of eight or ten pounds, with five holes in it in form of a cross.

† Poli. Virg.

Virgin Mary is finely dressed, and put into a bed, supported by cushions, and attended by a waiting lady, with six assistants: this bed is set up in church, surrounded with rich brocade, and all the people approach and adore it, kissing one of her hands. At Christmas, the virgin and the child are adored in a manger: and sometimes they hide the child Jesus, to represent his being lost in the temple; and they run up and down in quest of him, till some one is so happy as to find him. In the procession of the Rosary at Venice, the cross is followed by a number of little angels and saints, which are so many boys and girls: these are attended by several little black devils, which make a thousand ridiculous grimaces. These are followed by a number of devout women, to represent the saints of the Old Testament: a blessed virgin, richly dressed, and carrying a very large rosary in her hand follows, carried on a litter, and surrounded by the Dominicans, all armed with rosaries. At Courtray, on Good Friday, in commemoration of our Saviour's sufferings, the magistrates give twenty-five livres to a poor man, who submits to be scourged by the monks. He is brought into the church, stripped, and clothed in a purple robe, and his head crowned with thorns. He is then made to walk barefooted, with a pack-saddle tied to his neck: on each side of the saddle, six ropes are fixed: a cross is then laid upon him, with which he walks up and down the whole city. Twelve friars draw the ropes, till he is almost pulled to pieces: but a Mock-Simon, the Cyrenian, comes up very seasonably to give him a little assistance. The enraged multitude, all the way, treat him with rudeness, thinking it meritorious to imitate the conduct of the malicious Jews. The poor man is assured, that if he die under their hands, he is entitled to eternal happiness.

Ludovicus Vives has a passage complaining of such religious fooleries in his time, which deserves the rather to be inserted, that Gasper Quiroga, in the *Index Expurgatorius*, ordered it to be expunged. "It is now the custom," says he, "when the solemnity of Christ's death is celebrated, to exhibit plays unto the people, not much different from the old Pagan interludes. Of which practice, though I say no more, whosoever shall hear of it, will reckon it sufficiently scandalous, that plays should be made in a matter most serious. There Judas is derided, uttering the most foolish things he can devise, while betraying Christ. There the disciples flee, the soldiers pursuing them,

“ them, and that not without the laughter both of the ac-
 “ tors and spectators. There Peter cuts off the ear of
 “ Malchus, the ignorant multitude applauding him, as if
 “ hereby the captivity of Christ were sufficiently reven-
 “ ged. And a little after, he who had fought so valiant-
 “ ly, being affrighted with the questions of a little girl, de-
 “ nies his master, the multitude deriding the maid interro-
 “ gating, and hissing at Peter denying. Among so many
 “ players, among so many shouts and ridiculous fooleries,
 “ Christ only is serious and grave; and when he endea-
 “ vours to elicit sorrowful affections, I know not by what
 “ means, not only there, but also at the holy ordinances,
 “ he chills with the great wickedness and impiety, not so
 “ much of those who behold, or act these things, as of the
 “ priests who appoint them to be done *.” A divine of
 the Romish Church gives the following account: “ Now
 “ even stage-plays have a certain resemblance of images,
 “ and often move the pious affections of Christians more
 “ than prayer itself. And after this manner truly stage-
 “ plays and shews are wont to be exhibited on certain times
 “ of the year; the pictures of certain evangelical histories
 “ being annexed to them. On Palm-sunday, children ha-
 “ ving brought in the picture of our Saviour sitting upon
 “ an ass, sing praise to the Lord, cast boughs of trees on
 “ the ground, and spread their garments on the way: On
 “ Easter-eve, when the priest, after mid-night, receiving
 “ the image of the crucifix out of the sepulchre, goeth
 “ round about the church, and beats the doors of it that
 “ are shut, saying, Lift up your heads, &c. and the king
 “ of glory shall come in. And he who watcheth in the
 “ gates, demanding, Who is this king of glory? The priest
 “ replies, The Lord, strong, &c. Likewise on the day of
 “ the resurrection of our Lord, in the morning after com-
 “ mon prayers, angels in white, sitting upon the sepulchre,
 “ ask the women coming thither and weeping, saying,
 “ Whom seek ye? He is not here whom ye seek: Come
 “ see the place, &c. and go quickly, and tell his disciples.
 “ On the same day, the image of our Lord, bearing an en-
 “ sign of victory, is carried about, and placed on the altar,
 “ to be gazed at. So, on Ascension-day, in the sight of
 “ all the people, the image of the Lord is pulled up in the
 “ midst of the church, and shewn, as if taken up into hea-
 “ ven. In the mean time, about the image are little wing-
 “ ed

* Lud. Viv. *Notæ in August. de civit. dei.* l. 8. c. 2.

" ed images of angels, carrying burning tapers in their
 " hands, and fluttering up and down, while a priest sings,
 " I ascend unto my Father and your Father; and the cler-
 " gy sing after him, And unto my God and your God;
 " with other hymns and responses. On Whitfunday, the
 " image of a dove is let down in the midst of the church,
 " and presently a fire falls down together with it, accom-
 " panied with certain sounds, like the noise of guns, and the
 " priest sings, Receive ye the Holy Ghost, and the clergy
 " rechant, There appeared cloven tongues, &c. By all
 " which, and other such like spectacles, especially those
 " which represent the passion of our Lord, nothing else is
 " done, but that the sacred histories may be represented by
 " them, to those who, by reason of their ignorance, can-
 " not read them. So Conrade Bruno, in his book of i-
 " mages; and Bishop Lindane says, What else are these
 " spectacles and plays, than the living histories of laymen;
 " whereby the human affection is much more efficaciously
 " moved, than if they should read the same in private, or
 " hear them publicly read by others *." We read of others
 who have acted the crucifixion, exhibiting a man extended
 on a cross, with bloody wounds in his hands and feet, ha-
 ving his side pierced with a spear. Scarce any thing in the
 history of the Bible, in the martyrologies or legends, which
 festivals have a reference to, but has been thus scenically
 commemorated, and rendered present to spectators. And
 indeed if human devices be at all allowable in such matters,
 or if a lively impression on the fancy, or the brisk emotion
 of affections, tragical or comic, be true religion, those who
 have fallen upon this mode of exciting them, have not done
 so much amiss. It must certainly be no small improvement
 upon the original plan. But it would add a still higher de-
 gree of perfection to it, if all could learn the art of celebra-
 ting these solemnities, with such deep impressions, and cor-
 respondent feelings, as a certain would-be-saint declared
 she experienced. On all the festivals, it seems, she felt the
 very same pains and sufferings in her body, which the saint
 or martyr of the day had undergone: She was in prison,
 and manacled with fetters, on the day of St Peter in chains;
 was crucified with him on another; was beheaded on St
 John's day; on that of St Lawrence she was broiled on a
 S gridiron;

* Molan. *Hist. S. imag. & pict.* l. 4. cap. 18. *De ludis qui speciem
 quendam imaginum habent in quosdam anni solennitatibus.*

gridiron; on St Potamenia's put into a caldron of burning pitch; on that of St Hippolytus was dragged by wild horses; on others whipped with thongs, torn with iron talons, or gored and tossed on the horns of wild bulls. Poor girl! to keep the round of festivals for one year, in this manner, must bid fair to finish thy existence! Anniversaries, at this rate, must be serious days indeed! To think of them as perpetual, and to be doomed to keep such holidays for ever, what martyr so patient as to endure it? Yet ten long years, without murmuring, thou wast able to exhibit to a wondering world, this prodigy of commemorative devotion *. This, it must be owned, was doing the business to purpose, and entering truly into the spirit and mystery of the day.

What then is a commemorative holiday, but a present sign, and sensible representation of something absent and unseen, serving for a religious use, and in aid of devotion. Though possibly more striking emblems or sensible images may be wanting; though painting, statuary, theatrical mimicry and action should not lend their aid, yet the day itself serves as a more refined sort of imagery or exhibition. Whenever it occurs, we are obliged devoutly to turn our thoughts upon the subject of commemoration; as unavoidably and regularly as the sight of a Madona constrains her devotees to uncover the head, or bow the knee in deep commemoration of her celestial majesty. If the commemorative time be so happily chosen, as to fall upon the same day of the month or year on which the events commemorated are known to have happened, the sign will be so much the more lively and perfect, and the image will exhibit a more accurate and striking likeness. If other means of ex-

citing

* " La ville de Troyes a été celebre long tems par une fille qui vivoit miraculeusement sans manger, elle ne prenoit aucun aliment que les hosties quand elle communioit; et dans tous les jours de fête elle sentoit le supplice qu'avoit souffert le martyr et le saint du jour. Elle sentoit les douleurs de la crucifixion le jour de la fête de S. Pierre; celles de la decapitation à la fête de S. Jean: le jour de la fête de S. Laurent elle étoit comme sur le feu. Moi-même passant par Troyes l'an 1672 en ai appris toute l'histoire de gens qui étoient bien persuadés de la vérité du miracle, et il n'eut pas été seur de paroître en douter. Mais l'année suivante étant à Paris, je fus fort surpris d'entendre crier, dans les rues, une sentence de l'évêque de Troyes, qui lasse de cette comédie laquelle avoit déjà duré 10 ou 11 ans, fit examiner la fille par deux medecins et deux theologiens, la mit en sequestre dans une maison de religieuses, la convainquit de fourbe, l'en declara convaincuë par sa sentence. et lui ordonna sur peine d'excommunication, de suivre le train de vie ordinaire aux hommes." Jurieu, *Prejug. legitim. cont. le Papisme*, part. 2. ch. 22. p. 281.

citing a lively idea, contrived by human wit or art, be superadded, so much fitter still will it be for answering its purpose.

Upon this principle, how reasonable and beneficial must religious shows, processions and plays be accounted? How incentive to have some consecrated image, or some genuine relics of antiquity presented to the eyes? How overpowering the influence, if the advantage of holy places shall be conjoined with holy times? To go to the spot where some miracle was wrought; some saint dwelt or died; or where such a martyr was burnt, or lies entombed? Above all, to go to the theatre on which so many miracles and mysteries were exhibited, on which a person cannot take a step without some one or other of them springing up afresh to mind;—to look at the clefts in the rock that was smitten,—the pool of Siloam,—the place where Lazarus was raised,—the place where Jesus was apprehended, scourged, crucified,—the place where the body lay, and the mount from whence he ascended? Let us no longer laugh at those who have made vows to visit the thresholds of Peter and Paul; or have trudged away in pilgrimage to James of Compostella, or our lady of Laretto: Nor account them such idiots, who went on a like pious errand to the shrine of Thomas Becket, or thought a thousand miles a short way, when about to prostrate themselves before a privileged altar. These were surely the most effectual means to produce a lively idea of the objects of their devout commemoration. And if it be true, that belief is nothing else than a lively idea, as was the doctrine of a famous luminary in these northern parts (some time ago put under a bushel in a certain conspicuous place) then that Church which has been most fertile of such devices, and abounds most in such devotions, must be reputed the most *faith-full* Church in the world. The faith cannot fail to be kept where there are such effectual means for preserving and transmitting it from generation to generation.

The streets of some of our British cities are regularly merry once a-year on Christmas, and as sad and dull on Good Friday; because the former presents to the eyes of the mind at least, the image of the babe born in Bethlehem, and the latter that of the body on the cross. But would not a stable and a manger, with a choir of singing angels, add much to the significative solemnity of the first of these days, and suit as well the mystery of it, as a goose

or

or pies? And might not a huge crucifix, or a mock crucifixion, be an improvement in the symbolical celebration of the last? It might cause not a few women, in beholding, to beat their breasts, and to shed their tears more certainly and copiously than the *crambe repetita* of the formal curate, conning over his wonted lesson :

*Segnius irritant animos dimissa per aures,
Quem quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus.*

On a certain commemorative day appointed by the State, the mob and boys seem to enter a little more into the true spirit of symbolical commemoration, when bonfires are made to blaze in the street, and the effigy of the Pope, after meeting with sufficient indignities, is consigned into the flames, and gun-powder crackers fly about in plenty. If blasts of gun-powder be not a very religious, they may be allowed to be at least a sufficiently natural memorial of a treason to have been effected by gun-powder.

The 5th of November ensuing, is, by institution, to excite a remembrance of another 5th of November, and to awake the images of the notable occurrences of that day : This day must effect what no other day in the year could with such propriety be expected to do. As in water face answereth to face, so doth this 5th of November unto that. Herein, as in a glass, we are called to behold the joyful and glorious fight of a fleet and army landing at Torbay ; and being moved at the sight, through the medium of this secular anniversary-day, we must do nothing but rejoice in it. Though some connoisseurs of a nice taste may pretend, that this day offends against the rules of symbolical propriety, as the style has been unluckily altered in the course of the present century ; and as a Julian and a Gregorian day, though they may be marked by the same cypher, can never in reality tally or coincide together, the beauty of the image, and the fitness of the sign, will be a little spoiled. We are about to anticipate the conclusion of the century, eleven whole days before it will be actually completed ; and to look out for the landing of the Prince and his retinue, and to begin our rejoicings on that account, so long before the time. But this difficulty must be got over, as all others of the same kind have been, by resting in the authority of the Church appointing, as having power to make rites and ceremonies, and days significative and symbolical, which
otherwise

otherwise are not *. But as the people of Scotland have not hitherto been much accustomed, on the credit of the Church, devoutly to contemplate past events, through the consecrated medium of days, they will probably be at a loss to discern, in this case, the relation between the one and the other. The day alone will hardly exhibit to their gross conceptions a sufficiently lively image, but produce a faint impression, though perhaps aided by picturesque descriptions and oratorical painting. In condescension to ruder and duller souls, who never can enter either into metaphysical nor ecclesiastical subtleties, would it not be necessary to add some signs and ceremonies yet more palpable, which might speak more strongly to their senses; such as medals, pictures, statues, orange-livery and ornaments; a theatrical exhibition of a mock invasion, a mock flight, or the like. Would not these represent the events of the day *ad captum vulgi*, and more to the life?

C H A P. XI.

Abuses arising from Religious Festivals, a Reason for their Abolition.—They have been abused to Idolatry.—Abuses resulting from them in respect of Morals.—Evident from the History of their Celebration in all Ages, and under all Forms of Religion.

WE have already considered the danger of celebrating religious festivals of human institution in different views. Their tendency to superstition, and their subserviency to idolatry we have seen. Were there nothing else to dissuade Christians from them, this might be sufficient. What is good and necessary, indeed ought not to be omitted

* “ Dies tum beneficiorum ac mysteriorum Christi; tum martyrii sanctorum, &c. plerique ignoti et incerti sunt, atque hoc respectu mendacia sunt festa illa ac doctores mendacii, non minus ac Papisticae imagines. Nam conciones ac postillae hinc sonant illud, *hodie*; et populus putat illo ipso die haec gesta esse. Interim doctores inter illos latentur plurimos natales sanctorum in illos dies non incidisse aut saltem ignotos esse. Clavius Jesuita, dum propugnat kalendariem Gregorianam, concedit computationem Ecclesiasticam non correspondere exacte circulationibus caeli quia haec res non mathematicae sed moraliter pensanda est. Hinc Suarez distinguit æquinoctium in naturale et Ecclesiasticum. Ita Deus videtur confudisse computationem, ut vanitatem festorum ostenderet.” Voet, *de Fest.*

omitted or abolished on account of the abuses to which it may be liable: in that case, the rule holds, *Maneat usus, tollatur abusus*. But in things not necessary, which have a tendency to abuse, and which have been found to have been actually abused, a different course is to be followed. They are to be avoided and rejected. There are many things to which the words of Tertullian may be fitly applied; *non uti quam non abuti facilius*. Accordingly in those stricter and purer times, the Christians were cautious of adopting any customs from a false religion, and it was deemed a sufficient reason to avoid any practice, that it was abused to Pagan idolatry or Jewish superstition*. Erasmus, speaking of images, says, "as it is easier, so it is safer to remove them all out of temples, than to provide, that the mean be not exceeded, nor superstition mixed." On this head almost all reformed divines speak with one voice, and, on this principle, they got rid of Popish ceremonies, and human institutions: "It is a rule," says Rivet, "that things indifferent, not being necessary, when they are polluted with gross idolatry are to be abolished †." Farell, in a letter to Calvin says, "Princes may learn from Hezekiah's abolishing the brazen serpent, what they are to do with those rites which idle men have set up, and added significations to according to their own pleasure ‡." Zanchy speaks pertinently in the following terms: "As for that proposition, that good and useful things are not to be taken away because of abuse, it is nothing to the purpose, for that takes place only in things of themselves good and necessary, such as the preaching of the gospel, the administration of the sacraments, confession of the name of Christ; for, though many abuse these things to bad purposes, as gain, hypocrisy, yet are they not to be removed out of the Church. But for such things as both in their own nature, and by the law of God are indifferent, and which, without prejudice to salvation, may be omitted, though they were in the beginning instituted for good

* "Sed omnem afflatum ejus vice pestis etiam de longinquo devitemus, in universa serie humanae superstitionis sive diis suis, sive defunctis, sive regibus mancipatae, ut ad eosdem spiritus immundos pertinentis, modo per sacrificia et sacerdotia, modo per spectacula et hoc genus, modo per festos dies." Tert. *de Idol.* c. 13.

"Omni studio gentilium festivitates et ferias declinemus, quia qui vult esse divinorum particeps non debet esse socius idolorum." Amb. *Serm.* II.

† *Exp. Decal. Oper. tom. I.*

‡ Calv. *Ep.* 49.

“ good uses, yet, if afterwards we see them converted to
 “ pernicious abuses, piety towards God, and charity to-
 “ wards our neighbour, requires they should be removed *.”
 Musculus, expresses himself thus; “ God forbid that I
 “ should patronise Popish traditions, rites and worship; I
 “ call them Popish traditions, which either of their own
 “ nature, or by abuse, are serviceable to Popish impiety,
 “ superstition and blindness †.” Nay, festival-keepers
 themselves, speak not much differently on the general argu-
 ment; “ These ceremonies ye have so abused,” says Jewel
 to the Papists, “ that unless we will greatly offend, we can-
 “ not any longer retain them.” Bishop Andrews grants,
 “ Whatsoever is taken up at the injunction of man, when
 “ it is drawn to superstition, cometh under the compass
 “ of the brazen serpent, and is to be abolished ‡.” Even
 a friar of the Romish Church has the following remarkable
 notes on the history of Gideon, “ There was a double sin
 “ in Gideon, both that he made an ephod without warrant
 “ from God, and that seeing afterwards the abuse thereof,
 “ he took it not away. Now, who seeth not that the like
 “ happeneth to the Church? How many things did holy
 “ men ordain with a good intent, which we see at this day
 “ changed, partly by abuse, and partly by superstition?
 “ The feasts, ceremonies, images, masses, monasteries and
 “ the like, none of them were instituted to that purpose at
 “ first, for which now they are used; and yet we Gideons
 “ hold our peace: they take not away the abuse, they take
 “ not away the superstition §.” Even the canon law, bad
 as it is, tells us from Pope Stephen, “ That if our prede-
 “ cessors have done some things, which, at that time, might
 “ be without fault, and afterwards are turned to error and
 “ superstition, we are taught by Hezekias, his breaking the
 “ brazen serpent, that posterity are to destroy them with-
 “ out delay, and with great authority ||.”

This doctrine hath often and justly been applied to holi-
 days; “ These” says Bucer, “ have been tainted with so
 “ much superstition, that I marvel, if there can be any
 “ Christian who doth not tremble at their very names ¶.”

Rivet,

* Zanch. *Op. tom. 2. p. 403.*

† Musc. *de Trad. p. 696.*

‡ *Serm. in Phil. ii. 20.*

§ Frerus, *Annot. in Jud. cap. 8.*

|| Grat. *dist. 63. cap. Quia sancta.*

¶ “ Tantis superstitionibus contaminata illa festa fuerunt ut mirer si quis-
 “ quam Christianus sit qui ad nomina eorum non exhorrescat.” Buc. *in*
Mat.

Rivet, speaking of the observation of such days in England, says, " It is agreed amongst the orthodox, that they are celebrated by the Papists with manifest idolatry :—We could wish that as Hezekiah abolished the brazen serpent because some abused it, so they would abolish those holidays which are polluted with so many superstitions and idolatries in the papacy *." In the *Theses* of the Divines of Salmur, it is determined, " That it had been more adviseable and conducive to the welfare of the Christian Church, not to have admitted that destination and peculiar observation of days, because, as the event shews, from thence proceeded the superstition and idolatry which hath for so many ages overspread the Popish Church, from which leaven, those Churches are not altogether safe, which retain the primitive use of holidays ; inasmuch, that others fearing lest they should, from such use contract contagion, chose rather, in their reformation, wholly to abolish it †." Another systematic writer thus resolves the question about days dedicated in honour of saints, " They are full of idolatry, and therefore Christian Churches may not approve of them more than they may of the invocation of saints, which is manifest idolatry." And to the question, whether such holidays be rightly retained and celebrated, in case the idolatry be taken away, and the honour of the holiday terminate not in the saint but in God ? He replies, " that things in themselves indifferent, and noway necessary, being polluted with horrible idolatry, are to be abolished ; but these holidays are thus polluted in the Papal Church, and expose to much danger, no less than statues and images †."

But

* *Oper. tom. I. p. 1346.*

† *Thef. Salm. par. 3. § 7.* In the same place, it is added ; " In religione enim quando vel tantillum a dei præscripto disceditur, et homines aliquid sibi licere volunt aut putant, omnia tuta timenda sunt, si quidem experientia comprobatur est a quam exiguis et imperceptibilis initium mirus factus sit in idololatriam et horrendam superstitionem in Ecclesia Pontificia progressus. Denique abusus multiplex rei minus necessariae, prorsusque liberae et solutæ, nec admodum utilis, sufficit ad rem ipsam tollendam, ubi abusus vix ac ne vix quidem tolli potest, retenta re."

† *Wendel. Syst. Maj. l. 2. c. 6* So Altingius, " Quales autem ac quanti fuerint abusus harum festivitatum, etiam in vulgus notum est. Nec illi penitus cessarunt, etiam in ecclesiis Evangelicis ; quando plus religionis ac sanctitatis istis feriis quam diei Dominico fere ubique tribuitur. Si Ezechie regi licuit confringere serpentem æneum, dei jussu factum et aservatum, propter abusum superstitionis ; equidem vitio verti non potest piis Ecclesiarum reformatoribus, quod propter abusum non minorem, ferias humanitus solum institutas, sustulerunt." *Exig. Aug. Cont. art. 15.*

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But it is not in this view alone that they expose to danger, and are chargeable with abuse. They are no less dangerous in point of morality, and tend greatly to corrupt the manners of mankind. They have in all ages, and among all people, accustomed to celebrate them, exhibited scenes of folly, riot and profligacy. Never perhaps did human depravity appear in such glaring colours, as in the matter of what have been called religious festivals. The uniform tendency of all those of human institution, has been to strengthen the natural propensity in men to sensual delights, to foment the unruly passions, and produce disorderly practices. Under the colouring of religion, what have not men dared? Under the sanction of laws and customs reckoned sacred, they have broken loose from all restraints. Iniquity has been committed with greediness, when made, as in some cases it hath been, an essential part of devotion. What could check this fury of such devotees, or cause them to blush when the priests led the way, and their gods were supposed to nod approbation?

Solomon says, "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting." Yet scenes of noisy mirth and festivity have always had superior charms to attract the many of all ages and conditions. There is nothing in true religious joy that tends to taint or dissipate the soul. It composes at the same time that it elevates the mind, making it rise above the foggy region of sense, and the fumes of earthly delight. It never banishes recollection, gravity or decorum; never behaves unseemly. It gives relish to any fare, and makes chearful in every state. He that is habituated to this, hath a perpetual feast. And while eating and drinking with a merry heart, as his garments are always white, so his mind and manners are unspotted. But carnal mirth is of a very different complexion, and productive of very different effects. And when religion is made to consist in good cheer, full tables and flowing bowels, in laughter, music, reeling and dancing, then a people must become *carnal and walk as men*. Of this sort has the joy of holidays usually been. Something gross and carnal has usually belonged to it, or mingled with it; which is the rea-

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In like manner speaks Danæus; "Itaque neque dies illos colere aut ob-
 "servare necesse est aut etiam operæ pretium:—apparet quanta superstitio
 "postea inducta sit, et multitudo istorum dierum festorum, ut omnino tolli
 "satius sit." *Ethic. Christi. l. 2. c. 10.*

son why they have been so highly acceptable to the mobility.

If we look to the ancient Pagan solemnities, all was folly and madness, and in many of them lewdness and debauchery reigned without control. It was then they ran to all the excess of riot, of which the Apostle speaks; banquetings, revellings and abominable idolatries. When Israel were drawn by the wiles of the Moabites, to partake of their festival sacrifices, sensual impurities concluded the entertainment. At Babylon, where was a temple consecrated to Venus *Mylitta*, prostitution made part of the religious worship. Every woman was obliged to resort thither once in her life to receive infamous hire, which was dedicated to the goddess. In the same place, they observed a feast called *Shache*, which lasted five days, in which the masters were subject to their servants, and one of them royally attired was carried out of the house in pomp. At the great festival of *the Burning* at Hierapolis in Syria, which continued for several days, to which multitudes from all parts assembled, what mad freaks were performed by the Galli and other frantic worshippers: many of them stripping and mangling their bodies, or thumping violently against each other; while others beat tabrets and drums, sang aloud, and pretended to prophecy. Those who consecrated themselves by the customary mutilation, assumed the female dress, and wholly addicted themselves afterwards to a feminine life. At Byblis, in the worship of Astarte, another name for Venus, such women as would not shave their heads at the annual mourning, were obliged to submit for a time, to the same dishonour as those of Babylon. Her temple at Aphac, on mount Libanus, was a perfect sink of lewdness of all sorts, and continued to be so till Constantine razed the temple, and abolished the rites. The *Adonia* and *Aphrodisia* were festivals kept in honour of the same wanton goddess, in various parts of Greece, with little more modesty; especially at Cyprus and Corinth, to which multitudes thronged. At the latter place, they were wont to be celebrated by harlots; where troops of them were dedicated, and publicly maintained. The like practices took place at Comana in Cappadocia, and at the temple of Venus *Sicca* in Africa *. At Sparta, it was permitted by the laws, that the youth of both sexes should dance together in

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* Athen. *Deipnos.* l. 13. c. 6. Strabo, l. 8. Val. Max. l. 2. c. 6.

a promiscuous and most immodest manner, at the time of the solemn festivals and sacrifices. The Athenians, as Xenophon testifies, celebrated twice as many festivals as any other city, and at great expence, whereby they exhausted their treasury. On the most of these days, the shops and courts of judicature were shut up; labourers and tradesmen intermitted their employments, and mourners their sorrows: it was unlawful to utter a cry, a groan or expression of sorrow. Nothing but idleness and pleasure, mirth and jollity were to be found among them. The feasts of Bacchus, which were many, were kept with such uproar and licentiousness, as to become proverbial. So great was the profligacy of these times, that Aristippus, as the highest praise of a chaste woman, says, "That she will not be corrupted even at the Bacchanals*." Plato says, that on these occasions he has seen the whole city drunk. But then it was reputed no crime. It was a saying of the same philosopher, that "to drink to excess was not allowable, except upon the festival of that god who is the giver of wine†." This was part of the worship to which they were in duty bound: and those who were victors in their drinking contests, were then rewarded with a crown of leaves, and a vessel of wine. The ancients, according to Aristotle, had but few festivals besides those after harvest or vintage, for then they used to meet and make merry with the fruits they had gathered, eating and drinking plentifully, esteeming this as an offering of their first fruits in honour of the gods: hence banquets were called *Thiasoi*, from the word that signifies God‡. In these festivals, persons ran about in the night as well as day, in ridiculous postures, invoking the deity with loud shouts and yellings, and putting on the appearance of fury. They used also to ride in chariots, out of which they jested upon all that passed by. The slaves on the *Anthesteria* were allowed also to partake of the revelings. At their drinking-matches they were sure to remember the gods, and began with them. In the *Agrigonia*, the women assembled in the night, and made a strict search for Bacchus, as if he had fled from them; but finding their labour vain, they ended this ceremony, and regaled themselves with an entertainment: and so great excesses did they sometimes commit, that once the daughters of Minya, in a
furious

* Pyrrh, *Hypot.* l. 3. c. 24.

† Diog. Laert. l. 3.

‡ Arist. *Ethic.* l. 8. c. 9.

furious ecstacy, slaughtered Hippasus, the son of Leucippe, and served him up to the table. They used large quantities of ivy at that time, because that plant was accounted sacred to Bacchus, as was also the vine and fir. The Dionysian feasts, in which such disorders, antic and frantic acts were allowed, and in which the symbols of lewdness were carried in public processions, were in such reputation that their years were numbered by them, the chief Archon had a part in the management of them, and the priests that officiated in them, were honoured with the first seats at public shows. The *Kotyttia*, a nocturnal feast in honour of the goddess of wantonness, was celebrated in various places, with rites correspondent to such a character. Nor were the mysteries of Isis, of Ceres, of Cybele, of Saturn, less infamous for the debauchery accompanying them. A father remarks, they would have been ashamed to sing such songs, and utter such ribaldry in the hearing of their own mothers, or any modest woman, which they sung before the mother of the gods *. It is not only a shame to speak of those things which were done by them in secret, but of those which were spoken and acted openly on these days of licentiousness. The chief and worst of the Grecian feasts were kept by the Romans much in the same manner †. The disorders and shameless impudence which distinguished the feasts of Pan and Flora, need not be mentioned. Nor were scenes of horrid cruelty wanting on many of these great occasions. So that evil passion had free course, and vice in every form was made familiar to their eyes. No wonder though depravity of manners spread like a deadly pestilence through all ranks of people, when their solemn spectacles exhibited nothing but folly or crimes; and their holidays were nothing else but schools of immorality. A Cato, surrounded with such incentives, could hardly escape untainted, nor the most rigid Stoic preserve sobriety, or refuse to join in the general debauch. "We are now in the month of December," said Seneca, "the season in which the whole city is riotous. Public luxury has no bounds or restraint. Clamour and noisy preparations are
 " every

* Aug. de Civit. l. 2. c. 4.

† Quæreret conabar quare lascivia major,
 His foret in ludis liberiorque jocus;
 Sed mihi succurrit numen non esse severum,
 Aptaque deliciis munera ferre deam.
 Ebrius incinctis philyra conviva capillis
 Saltat, et imprudens utitur arte meri, &c.

Ovid. Fast.

“ every where heard; which show the difference between
 “ the Saturnalia and working days. If you were here, I
 “ would readily ask you, what part you would judge pro-
 “ per to act, whether unmoved by the general custom, we
 “ should continue our ordinary way of life, or lest we
 “ should seem to dissent from the public mode, we should
 “ throw the gown aside, and feast merrily with the rest?
 “ At present, let us disguise ourselves for the sake of plea-
 “ sure, and the celebration of days of festivity. Perhaps
 “ you will, on such occasions as these, assume a greater se-
 “ verity, and a stricter regimen, that you be restricted
 “ from diversion, when every body else resigns himself
 “ wholly to it. It will doubtless be a proof of greater for-
 “ titude, to remain cool and sober, when the croud around
 “ is reeling with wine, and vomiting in the streets. But
 “ complaisance obliges us not to affect singularity, but to
 “ do what others do, though not in the very same manner.
 “ —For one may keep holiday without dissoluteness*.”

Here we may plainly perceive, that our Christmas jollity is of far higher antiquity than the event it pretends to commemorate. These holidays belong originally, and of right, to the venerable old Saturn, of whom strange stories have been told. These Saturnalia were kept for seven days together; and were succeeded by the feast of the Kalends, on the first of January, in honour of their idol Janus, which they solemnized as the rest, with feasting, dancing, drinking, stage-plays, mummeries, masques, and mutual gifts.

On

* “ December est mensis, cum maxime civitas desudat, jus luxuriæ publicæ datum est: ingenti apparatu sonant omnia: tanquam quidquam inter saturnalia interfit, et dies rerum agendarum, &c. Sen. *Epist.* 18.

Philo-Judæus gives the following just account of the Roman festivals: “ In omni festo nostro et celebritate quæ miramur, sunt hæc: securitas, remissio, ebrietas, potatio, commestationes, delicia, oblectamenta, patentes januæ, pernoctationes, indecentes voluptates, insolentia, exercitium intemperantiæ, insipientiæ meditatio, studia turpitudinis, honestatis perniciës, nocturnæ excitationes ad cupiditates inexplebiles; somnus diuturnus quando vigilandi tempus est, naturæ ordinis perversio; tunc virtus ridetur ut noxia, vitium tanquam utile rapitur: tunc in contemptu sunt quæ oportet facere, quæ vero non oportet in prætio: tunc philosophia, et omnis eruditio tenent silentium: ac istæ artes quæ suis lenociniis ventri, et his quæ sub ventre sunt, voluptatem conciliant, ostendunt suam facundiam. Hæc sunt festa istorum qui se felices dicunt: quorum turpitudò, quamdiu inter privatos parietes locaque profana continetur, minus peccare mihi videntur: ubi vero torrentis in morem populans omnia, vel in sacratissima templa irrumpit quicquid in his sanctum est sternit continuo, faciens profana sacrificia, præces irritas, profana enim mysteria simul et orgia, pietatem sanctitatemque fucatam et adulterinam, castitatem impuram, veritatem falsatam, cultum dei supersticiosum.” *De Cherub.*

On these days all servants were set at liberty, and sat at table with their masters, and every man wandered about without control, and took his fill of pleasure. Fiddlers and others strolled up and down through the cities in womens apparel, acting with much wantonness.

Wherever we cast our eyes among the Pagan nations, ancient or modern, we will perceive similar practices prevailing on all their festal days. The God of the world was then most solemnly honoured; and nothing appeared on them but "the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life." At Bubastis, when the feast of Diana was celebrated, great multitudes of men and women convened from all places; often amounting to 700,000. They sailed along the river Nile with music and shoutings, and when they passed any of the cities on shore, the women would dance, make ridiculous motions, and brawl with the inhabitants: when they reached the place of their destination, many sacrifices were offered, and more wine was then consumed, than in all the year beside. The feast of Minerva at Sais, was celebrated by lighting of lamps, wherewith they went about the walls of the city by night. Lights were set up through all Egypt by those who could not attend. A ceremony also practised at Athens, and in other places in honour of the same goddess, as also at Rome in the feasts of *Februa*. This was the Pagan Candlemas. At Papremus on the solemnity of Mars, there was a club-fight, which made part of the sacred ceremonial, in which many were wounded, and some slain. At Busiris, on the feasts of Isis, thousands were wont to beat themselves, while others cut their foreheads with swords. In these Egyptian feasts, and in many of the same kind in various nations; such rites and symbols were used as are too abominable to be mentioned.

The Sacæan feasts in Persia, which from the time of their first emperors, have been continued down to modern times, were celebrated much in the Bacchanalian manner; men and women, both day and night drinking to the greatest excess. The modern Pagans throughout the world exactly copy the customs of honouring their false deities with Pageant shows, noisy mirth, music, dancings, banquets, revellings, and sometimes horrid cruelties. In Madagascar, several days preceding their festival of circumcision, are spent in a variety of amusements, ending in intemperance; for, on these occasions, it is accounted an honour to be drunk.

drunk. In the island of Ceylon, on the grand festival in honour of Buddu, which lasts 15 days, 40 or 50 elephants lead on the procession, followed by men disguised as giants, with drums and trumpets, and a band of women dancing to the various tunes. In Japan, the Molucca and Philippine islands, their manner of rejoicing is no less sensual and voluptuous. Nor is it much different throughout the Indian continent, the kingdoms of Africa, or the American world. He who reads Abbé Raynal's *Philosophical History of both the Indies*, will find sufficient instances of this; though the author shews but too great an inclination to excuse all such excesses, and represents the most criminal indulgences as rites pleasing to the deity; according to the absurd system of modern infidels equally irreligious, immoral, and inconsistent, putting all religions, in all their various forms, and with all their several rites, on a level. Another, of that fraternity is pleased to say, that "the religion of the Pagans consisted in nothing but morality; morality which is common to men of all ages and places; and festivals, which were no more than times of rejoicing, and could not be of prejudice to mankind*." It is hard to say whether it is more ridiculous in this author to place the religion of the Pagans in morality, which properly made no part of it at all, or to associate morality and their festivals in friendship together. Before either the religion or morality of their festivals can be established, almost every precept of the decalogue must be expunged. Their morality, indeed, may accord with the sentiments of those who never reckoned sobriety, chastity and purity among the virtues; nor consider drunkenness, fornication, adulteries, rapes, incests, sodomy, &c. as a violation of duty. What must we think of these gods who can be delighted with the streaming blood, the reeking entrails, the mangled flesh, and quivering hearts of human victims expiring at their altars:—or could be pleased with the cries of tortured infants, or the acclamation of a multitude glutting themselves with the sight of gladiatory butcheries? or what sort of moralists must they be who can suppose such practices no way prejudicial to mankind? but almost all nations graced their solemnities with such sacrifices; if any credit is due to ancient authors; as the Phœnicians, Scythians, Arabians, Carthaginians, Greeks, Romans, Gauls, Germans. We have been told also of the bloody sacrifices of men and children, which formerly

* Volt. *Hist. du Siècle de Lou.* XIV.

merly defiled the temples of Mexico and Peru :—on some occasions, they are said to have amounted to an incredible number. In some countries, there are some who honour the festivals of their devil-gods by mutilating their bodies, by voluntarily drowning or burning themselves, or by cutting their own throat. On the coast of Malabar, they will sometimes throw themselves before the wheels of a chariot drawn by half a hundred men, groaning under the weight of a monstrous idol, that they may be devoutly crushed to death. In the city of Quilacare, they have an idol in high esteem, to which they solemnize a feast every 12th year, to which they resort as the Papists to their jubilee. The King, after washing himself, and praying before the idol, ascends a scaffold, where, in presence of the people, he cuts off his ears, nose, lips and other parts, casting them towards the idol, and then concludes the ceremony by cutting his throat. His successor must always be present, and, in his turn, is obliged to undergo the same martyrdom, when his twelve years are expired.

But perhaps the manifold abuses and vices which have been attendant upon Pagan festivals, may be attributed to the peculiar genius of their religion, and the examples of these fabulous persons to whose honour they were consecrated. No doubt, this tended greatly to produce such effects. Many of their gods and goddesses being represented as of infamous characters, and examples of vice and impunity, their worships could not fail to imbibe more greedily the infection. They thought it justifiable to indulge themselves in practices, however vile or villanous; which had such high patronage, especially on their solemnities: and that these might be better known, and operate more powerfully, the histories and intrigues of their shameful divinities were represented, in the most lively and engaging manner, in plays upon the stage; which usually, with the Greeks and Romans, made part of the sacred rites, and were then frequented by all sorts of persons: on which account, all the public spectacles, and especially the theatrical plays, were most severely condemned by the primitive Church, both as being a principal part of the consecrated worship of the demons, and as exhibiting nothing but flagitious scenes, and strong incentives to debauchery*. “Thou mayst behold
“ in

* “Nihil nobis cum impudicitia theatri,” Tert. *apol.*

“Ludi

“ in theatres,” said Cyprian, “ that which may affect thee both with grief and shame. It is a tragedian’s part to relate ancient wickednesses in verse ; the ancient horrors of parricides and incestuous persons is represented by him to the life, lest those wickednesses which were committed in former ages, should grow obsolete in after times. Every age is admonished, that whatever villainy was actually committed in former times, may be committed still. These things are now made examples, which have ceased to be sins. Then you may know from stage-players what filthiness any man hath committed in secret, or hear what he might have done. Thus, adultery is learnt, while it is beheld ; and the evil of public authority, playing the pander to these vices, she, who at first perhaps came a chaste matron to the play, returns a strumpet from the play-house. What a great corruption of mens manners, what excitement to dishonourable actions, what fuel to vices is it to be polluted with histrionical gestures, to see filthy incest elaborately acted.—They represent unchaste Venus, adulterous Mars, yea, their great Jove, not more a prince in dominion than in vices, burning with his very thunderbolts into earthly loves ; sometimes waxing white in the feathers of a swan ; at other times descending in a golden shower ; anon coming forth attended with birds to ravish and snatch away tender youths. Think now whether those who behold these spectacles can be untainted or chaste, while they imitate the gods they worship ? Even sins themselves are made religious to these wretches*.”

“ Your tragedies and comedies,” said another early apologist for Christianity, “ Glory in incestuous persons, and yet you willingly both read and hear them. No wonder

U

“ then,

“ *Ludi scenici, spectacula turpitudinum, et licentia vanitatum, non hominum vitis, sed deorum vestrorum jussis Romæ instituti sunt.*” Aug. *de civit.*— “ *Comœdiæ et tragiæ vestræ incestis gloriantur, quas vos libenter et legitis et auditis : et sic deos colitis incestos, cum matre, cum filia, cum sorore conjunctos ; merito igitur incestum penes vos sæpe deprehenditur semper admittitur.*” Min. Fæl. p. 101.

“ *Quid sœna ? Num sanctior ? In qua Comœdia de stupris et amoribus ; Tragedia de incestis et parricidis fabulatur. Histrionici etiam impudici gestus, quibus infames fœminas imitantur, libidines, quas saltando expriment, docent. An non minus corruptela disciplinarum est ? In quo fiunt per imaginem, quæ non sunt, ut fiant sine pudere, quæ vera sunt. Spectant hæc adolescentes ; quorum lubrica ætas, quæ frænari, ac regi debet, ad vitia et peccata his imaginibus eruditur. Fugienda igitur omnia spectacula,*” &c. *Lact. Divin. Inst. c. 6.*

* Cyp. *Epist. l. 2. ep. 2.*

“ then, that incest be often both committed and tolerated
 “ among you :—We therefore, who are valued according
 “ to our manners and modesty, deservedly abstain from
 “ your wicked pleasures, shews, and stage-plays, whom we
 “ know to have taken their original from your idol-wor-
 “ ship, and which, as noxious enticements we condemn.
 “ For, in your chariot-plays, who would not abhor the
 “ madness of the people brawling among themselves? or
 “ the art of murder in sword-plays? in stage-plays like-
 “ wise there is no less fury, and more prolix obscenity.
 “ For in these now, the jesting actor, doth either expound
 “ adulteries, or personate them; at another time, the effe-
 “ minate stage-player, while he feigns love, doth violent-
 “ ly inflict it. The same, by personating whoredoms, sighs,
 “ hatreds, disgraceth your gods : and the same by feigned
 “ grief, provokes your tears with his vain gestures and nods.
 “ Thus you are desirous of real murder, while you bewail
 “ feigned *.”

If licentiousness had only attended the festivals of the
 shameful idols of Paganism, it might, with apparent rea-
 son, have been ascribed to the relation which they bore to
 these. But this was very far from being the case. It has
 closely followed in their train, wherever they have appear-
 ed with celebrity. Whether they have made part of the re-
 ligious rites of Bacchus, or Bercynthia, or Mahomet, or
 have been intended to honour more sacred names, we may
 always behold them very much the same. To say nothing
 here of the holy times enjoined by that impostor, whose re-
 ligion is so favourable to sensual delights, even under the
 pure laws of Christianity itself, the Pagan immorality, as
 well as idolatry, have crept in along with them, and clea-
 ved fast unto them. Grievous and just were the reproaches
 wherewith the early writers of the Church loaded the Gen-
 tiles, for their flagrant abuses in this kind. Earnest were
 their admonitions, and sharp their reproofs to the Christians,
 who manifested an inclination to associate with them in
 these, as in many instances it seems they soon began to do †.

But

* Min. Fæl. p. 101. 123.

† In the book of Apostolical Constitutions, Clemens Romanus complains ;
 “ That many leaving the congregation of the faithful, with the church and
 “ laws of God, did run to the plays of the Grecians, and hasten unto
 “ theatres, desiring to be made partakers of filthy, not to say abominable
 “ words and spectacles.” Asterius complained, that “ many preferring
 “ their vain plays, pleasures and employments, absented themselves from
 “ the church and holy sermons on holidays, and on the feast of kalends.”

But their joining the rout, and countenancing the revellings of their heathen neighbours, was not the only offence they were chargeable with. But symptoms of the same corruption began early to appear among themselves, and grew at last to such a degree, that it was difficult to say which of them exceeded in profaneness, or merited the greater reproach.

How soon they began to feast luxuriously, and get drunk at the martyrs tombs, and to be guilty of indecent practices in their nightly vigils, which occasioned prohibitions against them, we have occasionally noticed already. In proportion as they multiplied their holidays and rites, and substituted them in the place of others formerly in use, the Christian worship and manners became corrupt beyond expression, in spite of all efforts to the contrary: Religion and sobriety were banished from their solemnities, and nothing but the spirit and lusts of the world reigned in them. On several of these kept in later times, a levity, rustic mirth and mad frolics were considered as belonging to the due celebration of them; and some of them were introduced with no other view. And on all of them, even on those consecrated to the most solemn mysteries of religion, the bounds of moderation

Leo I. lamented, "That unruly spectacles were more frequented than the "blessed solemnities of the martyrs."—Chrysostome, and many of the fathers, abound in complaints of this sort. "There are many," says Clemens of Alexandria, "who, after they are departed from the church, laying aside their show of gravity, run unto play-houses, the chair of pestilence, and delight themselves abroad with wicked sports and amorous songs, being filled with the noise of pipes, with clapping of hands, with drunkenness, with all kind of filth and dirt."—"I verily believe," says Chrysostome in one of his homilies, "that many of those who left us yesterday, and departed to the spectacles of iniquity, are this day present. I could wish I might know who they are, that I might excommunicate them from the church; not that they should always continue without, but that being chastised, they might return again," &c.

"We prefer pastimes," says Salvian, "before the church of God; we despise the altars, and honour the theatres: If it fall out that a holiday be kept, and common plays be proclaimed at the same time, I ask every man's conscience which place hath greater troops of Christians? Whether the yard of the public play-house, or the court of God's house? Whether do men flock most to the temple or the theatre?—If the church keep any feast on that day when there are solemn plays, those who say they are Christians, not only abstain from coming to the church, but if any, not knowing of the plays, come casually thither, if they hear in the very church that there are plays acting abroad, they leave the church and repair to them. The church of God is despised to run unto theatres: The church is emptied, the play-house filled. We leave Christ on the table to feed our adulterous eyes with the most impure sight of filthy interludes." *Nos Ecclesiam Dei ludicra anteponimus; nos altaria spernimus, et theatra honoramus, &c.* Salv. de Gubern. Dei, l. 6.

ration were but too commonly exceeded. Of the nature, as well as degree of these abuses, the multiplied complaints of the public teachers and writers in different ages, together with some of the canons of councils passed with reference to them, will give us the best and most just idea. Of these the following are a specimen :

“ Alas, for grief!” says Cyril of Alexandria, “ very
 “ many among us Christians, imitate this madness and dis-
 “ honesty of the Jews, who upon holidays and solemn festi-
 “ vals giving themselves over to scandalous plays, to drun-
 “ kennes, to dancing, or other vanities of the world, when
 “ they ought to serve God more diligently, to frequent the
 “ churches more earnestly, to be instant in prayers, and
 “ engaged in ecclesiastical duties, do then most of all pro-
 “ voke God with their most dissolute manners. Is this, O
 “ Christians, to celebrate an holiday, to pamper the belly,
 “ and to let loose the reins to unlawful pleasures? If work
 “ be prohibited on holidays, which must be used for the
 “ necessary sustenance of life,—are not those things then
 “ much more forbidden, which cannot be committed with-
 “ out sin, and great offence to God? On days that are al-
 “ lowed for servile work, every one is intent upon his own
 “ business; and he abstains from drunkenness, pastimes and
 “ vanities: But on holidays, men every where run to the
 “ ale-house, to plays, to interludes, and dances, to the de-
 “ rision of God’s name, and perversion of the day. Let
 “ them therefore repent, and labour utterly to extirpate
 “ this tare, which the envious one hath sown in the field of
 “ the Lord *.” Chrysostome, in a homily made upon one
 of the festivals of the martyrs, says, “ Ye have turned the
 “ night into day, by keeping your holy stations all the
 “ night: Do not now turn the day into night again, by
 “ surfeiting and drunkenness, and lascivious songs †.” Am-
 brose inveighs against those in his time, who joined the ob-
 servation of their Christian solemnities and the Gentile feasts
 together, and introduced into the Church feasting, drunken-
 ness and wantonness ‡.

Augustine

* Cyr. in *Evang. Joh.* l. 8. c. 5.

† Chrys. Hom. 59. in Mat.

‡ “ Est mihi adversus plerosque vestrum fratres, querela non modica; de
 “ his loquor, qui nobiscum Natalem Domini celebrantes, Gentilium se feriis
 “ dediderunt, et post illud celeste convivium superstitionis sibi prandium pa-
 “ raverunt; ut qui ante late-lateficati fuerant sanctitate, inebriarentur va-
 “ nitate; ignorantes quod qui vult regnare cum Christo non possit gaudere
 “ cum sæculo: Et qui vult invenire justitiam, debet declinare luxuriam.—

“ Idoli

Augustine, in his letter to Aurelius, bishop of Carthage, written about the year 392, laments the feasts which were made in church-yards, and at the martyrs graves, under pretence of religion, desiring the bishop to give order about them. He says, that of the three vices, namely, drunkenness, discord and uncleanness, the last only seemed to be punished in the Church: that the others were tolerated; yea they thought to honour the martyrs by their drunkenness. That this abuse was not in the churches of Italy, or else it had been reformed by the care of their bishops: and that though this bishop wanted neither zeal nor knowledge to correct it in his diocese, yet the disorder was so rooted, that he thought there was no hope to see it abolished, but by the authority of a council. He thought if any particular church was to do it, that of Carthage ought to begin; yet that such abuses were not to be opposed by roughness or imperiousness; but instructions were to be used rather than commands; and counsels rather than threatenings. And since the people were persuaded, that these feasts were not only to the honour of the martyrs, but also gave ease to the dead, he would have the offerings made in the church for the dead, to be done without pomp and affectation.—The council of Hippo accordingly ordained, next year, that the people should be hindered from keeping these feasts, which degenerated into drunkenness and debauchery, by all possible means. But when the festival of Leonitius, who had been bishop of Hippo, approached, the people murmured, that they should not be permitted to keep it with the usual rejoicings. Augustine set himself in opposition to them, and in certain discourses on the subject, represented those as dogs who snarl at the commands of God; and as swine, those who wallow in

“ Idoli portio est inebriare vino mentem, ventrem cibo distendere, saltationibus membra torquere, et ita pravis actionibus occupari, ut cogaris ignorare quod Deus est. Ergo si nos sumus templum Dei, cur in templo Dei colitur festivitas idolorum? Cur ubi Christus habitat, inducitur commessatio, ebrietas atque lascivia? Dicit salvator, *Nemo potest duobus dominis servire*; Quomodo igitur potestis religiose Epiphaniam Domini procurare, qui jam *Kalendas*, quantum in vobis est, devotissime celebrastis? Janus enim homo fuit, unius conditor civitatis, in cujus honorem a gentibus *Kalendæ* sunt *Januarie* nuncupatæ: Unde qui *Kal. Januarius* colit, peccat, quoniam homini mortuo defert divinitatis obsequium. Inde est quod ait Apostolus; *Dies observatis et menses*, &c. Observavit enim diem et mensem qui his diebus aut jejunavit, aut ad ecclesiam non processit. Observavit diem, qui hesterno die non processit ad ecclesiam, processit ad campum. Ergo, Fratres, omni studio Gentilium festivitatem et ferias declinemus, ut quando illi epulantur, tunc nos simus febrii, atque jejuni, quo intelligant latitiam suam nostra abstinentia condemnari.” *Serm. in Circumc. Dom.*

in unclean pleasures, and would commit in the church that which renders them unworthy of holy things; he shewed how Jesus Christ, who drove out buyers and sellers from the temple, would have been more zealous in banishing from it dissolute feasting: adding, that the Jews, carnal as they were, made no feasts in his temple, nor did it appear that they were drunken upon any pretence of religion, unless it were in the worship of idols. By Scripture, vehement exhortations, prayers, and tears, he endeavoured to dissuade them from these practices. Yet when the feast-day came, some still murmured, and said, "What would they have now? Were not they Christians who suffered this custom? Why was it to be abolished at this time?" He pled with them at least to put it off for the present: But in order to justify those who had borne with it so long, he represented, that "after the persecutions, the Heathens, who were converted in crouds, were with great difficulty brought to renounce the feasts made in honour of their idols. Regard was had to their weakness in this particular, and they were permitted to make some such like rejoicings in honour of the martyrs, till they were capable of joys purely spiritual: But now it is time to live like true Christians, and to reject what was allowed to your fathers, for no other reason, but to bring them to Christianity." He proposed to them the example of the churches on the other side of the sea, where this custom was either never allowed, or was abolished by pious bishops; and, among others, by Ambrose. They objected the example of the church of St Peter's at the Vatican, where these feasts were observed every day; and Paulinus complains of this very abuse. He replied, "I have heard that it hath often been prohibited, but the place is far from the bishop's habitation; and in so large a city, there is a multitude of carnal persons, especially strangers, who daily resort thither." With much ado, he at last prevailed to have their ordinary feasting turned, for this time, into reading, exhortations, and singing of psalms; while the heretics continued to feast in their churches as usual. Of this reformation, he gives an account to Alypius, bishop of Tagasta, requesting him to remove the same abuse in his church*.

The same father, on another occasion, thus addresses his hearers: "Admonish your neighbours and friends always
" to

* Aug. *op. to. 2. Ep. ad Alyp.*

“ to speak that which is good and honest, lest perchance by
 “ evil speaking, by dancing on holy festivals, and by sing-
 “ ing luxurious and wanton songs, they, by their tongue,
 “ whereby they ought to have praised God, may seem to
 “ inflict wounds on themselves. For these unhappy per-
 “ sons, who neither are afraid nor ashamed to exercise
 “ themselves in such songs and dances before the very tem-
 “ ples of the saints, although they should come Christians
 “ to the church, yet they return Pagans from it, because
 “ this custom of singing and dancing is taken up from the
 “ observation of Pagans *.” Another, in the latter end of
 the 4th century, speaking of the feast of the Kalends, says,
 “ In this feast the people learn the infamous and dishonest
 “ arts and studies of stage-players, from whence effeminacy
 “ and dissoluteness of manners proceeds. Doth not the
 “ man of valour then degenerate into a woman, with his
 “ veiled face. He lets his coat hang down to his ankles;
 “ he ties a girdle about his breast; he puts on womens
 “ shoes; he carries about a distaff, with wool, and draws
 “ out a thread with his right hand, &c. These are the
 “ profits of this solemnity! these the advantages and fruits
 “ of this day’s public feast †.” A later writer says, “ The
 “ devil, the enemy of mankind, after Easter, yea on Ea-
 “ ster-day itself, gathers together an army of dancers, that
 “ he may take from the sons and servants of Christ their
 “ spiritual fruits, which they have gathered together in the
 “ Lent-time ‡.”

The African council, at which Augustine was present,
 made the two following canons, which were subscribed by
 238 bishops: 1. “ That those feasts which were used in ma-
 “ ny places contrary to divine precepts, which were drawn
 “ from the error of the Gentiles, should be prohibited, and
 “ under pains, excluded from cities and villages, especial-
 “ ly, since in some cities men fear not to keep them, even
 “ on the birth-days of the most blessed martyrs, and that
 “ in the very churches: On which days also (shameful to
 “ speak) they use most wicked dances through the villages
 “ and streets, so that the matronal honour and the modesty
 “ of

* “ Isti enim infelices et miseri homines qui balationes et saltationes ante
 “ ipsas basilicas sanctorum exercere nec metuunt, nec erubescunt etsi ad
 “ Christiani ad Ecclesiam venerint, Pagani de Ecclesia revertuntur. Aug.
 de temp. serm. 215.

† After. Hom.

‡ Alex. Fabrit. *Destruct. vitior. par.* 3. c. 10.

“ of innumerable women, devoutly coming to the most holy day, is assaulted by petulant and lascivious injuries, so that even access to the holy exercises of religion is almost interrupted and discontinued. 2. That the spectacles of the theatres, and other plays, should be wholly removed on the Lord's day, and other celebrated Christian festivals; especially because on the Easter-holidays, people run more to the Circus, or theatre, than to the church, laying aside all their holiday-devotion, when these spectacles come in their way: Neither ought any Christian to be compelled unto them.”

Some time after this, we find a council of Toledo, in Spain, enjoining, that “ the irreligious custom should be altogether exterminated, which the common people have used upon the festivals of the saints. People who ought to attend divine offices, addict themselves wholly to dancing and filthy songs, not only to their own hurt, but also to the prejudice of the exercises of the religious.” This canon was ratified by a royal edict, the king punishing the breach of it in rich men, with the loss of the half of their estates; and in the poorer sort, by perpetual exile.

The sixth council of Constantinople, near the end of the 7th century, made the following decree: “ We will, that what are called the *Kalends*, and *Winter-wisbes*, and that meeting which is kept on the first day of March, be wholly taken away out of the city of the faithful; as also, we wholly forbid and banish the public dancings of women, productive of much mischief, and many pernicious effects; and likewise those dances and mysteries which are performed in the name of those falsely called gods among the Grecians, or in the name of men and women, after the ancient manner, and very different from the life of Christians: Ordaining, that no man shall henceforth be clothed in woman's apparel, nor any woman in man's: Neither may any one put on comical, satirical or tragical masks, or act such characters; neither may they invoke the name of execrable Bacchus, when they press their grapes in wine-presses; nor pour out wine in tubs, to provoke laughter, exercising those things through ignorance or vanity, which proceed from the imposture of the devil. Those who shall hereafter attempt any of these things, after due information, if clergymen, they shall be deposed; if laymen, excommunicated.” A Synod in France, about the middle of the 8th

8th century, enacted, that " every bishop in his parish shall
 " take care that the people of God make no Pagan feasts or
 " interludes, but that they reject all the filthy abominations
 " of the Gentiles, whether the profane sacrifices of the
 " dead, fortune-tellers, diviners, &c. or immolated sacrific-
 " es, which foolish men make near unto churches, after
 " the Pagan manner, in the name of holy martyrs and con-
 " fessors, provoking God and his saints to wrath and ven-
 " geance: as also, that they diligently inhibit those sacri-
 " legious fires, which they call *Nesfri* (bonfires), and all
 " other observances of the Pagans whatever." The Synod
 of Nantz, about the end of the 9th age, ordained, " That
 " no minister, when he shall come to the thirtieth, or the
 " seventh or third anniversary-day of any dead person, or
 " may be invited to a gathering, may presume on any ac-
 " count to intoxicate himself: Neither may he, being in-
 " treated by the love of the saints, or of his own soul, pre-
 " sume to drink, or to cause others to drink, or to glut
 " himself upon the request of another; nor yet use shouts
 " (*plausus*) or rude laughter, or there relate or sing any
 " vain fables: Neither may he suffer (*turpia joca*) base or
 " foolish pastimes to be made before him, with bears or
 " tumblers; nor consent that vizards, or figures of demons,
 " be exhibited before him, because this is diabolical, and
 " prohibited by sacred canons." A Synod at Rome, un-
 der Lothario, says, " Let the priests admonish men and wo-
 " men, when they meet together at church on holidays,
 " that they sing no filthy songs, nor lead or hold any dan-
 " ces." We find canons enacted at different times against
 these practices, which shows how common they were be-
 come *.

In the following ages, the abuses grew more and more fla-
 grant. A synod, in the beginning of the 15th century, prohi-
 bits all from countenancing those dishonest plays which were
 wont to be made in some churches on the feasts of Innocents
 and the Nativity. We are assured by Polydore Virgil,
 that as early as the days of Henry II. in the 13th century,
 it was the custom of the English to spend their Christmas in

X

plays,

* By the decretal of Eugene, against women employing themselves in vain
 sports on festivals, we are told: " Sunt quidem et maxime mulieres, qui
 " festis ac sacris diebus atque sanctorum natalitiis non delectantur ad eccle-
 " siam venire sed balando ac verba turpia decantando, ac choreas ducendo,
 " similitudinem paganorum peragendo advenire procurant. Tales enim si
 " cum minoribus veniunt ad ecclesiam, cum majoribus peccatis revertuntur."

plays, masks, in magnificent and costly spectacles, and to addict themselves to pleasures, dancing, dicing and other games, which were then tolerated, contrary to the usage of most other nations, who used such plays and pastimes, not in the Christmas season, but a little before their Lent about Shrove-tide: and that in his own time, holidays were most acceptable to youth for no other reason, but because they had then leisure to lead about dances; especially among the Italians, who, after the custom of the ancient Pagans, did usually exhibit spectacles and plays unto the people, reciting comedies, and personating the lives and martyrdoms of the saints in the vulgar tongue; as formerly the Romans, in their religious festivals recited poems in the theatres, and exhibited spectacles of beasts and sword-players in amphitheatres*.

At the time of the meeting of the Council of Constance, among other abuses then reigning in the Latin Church, that of festivals was particularly complained of by a number of leading men, who were insisting for some reformation: among whom were Henry of Hesse, Peter d'Alli, Gerson, and Nicholas de Clemangis. Some of these wrote copiously and warmly on the subject. Peter d'Alli, in his *Treatise of Reformation*, insisted, "That excepting Sundays, and the great festivals instituted by the Church, people ought to be allowed to work on holidays after divine service, as well on account of the debaucheries and enormities in which the generality of people indulge themselves on those days, as out of regard to labouring men who have need of all the time they breathe in, to get their livelihood." Gerson, in his sermon before the Council on the Nativity of the Virgin, expressed himself to be of the same sentiments; yet, in the very same discourse wherein he blames the old, and finds fault with the introduction of new festivals, he made a proposal to the Council to institute one in favour of Joseph's Virginity. A regulation with regard to the abuses complained of, was accordingly proposed by what was called the *Reforming College* instituted at that time: But little was gained by it. They were for "abolishing all festivals

Lib. 5. c. 2. The same writer says: "Apud nos festis diebus templa et domus nuptiales aulae exornantur; lauro, hedera, aliisque festis frondibus vestiuntur fores, ac vestibula coronantur, spargunturque floribus. Quæ hercle omnia ipsi idolorum cultores antea servabant.—Quinetiam jam ita usu venit ut non censeatur esse festus ac sollemnis dies, nisi sit opiparo comitata convivio," &c. *lib. 5. c. 1.*

“ festivals which are not instituted by the old law, and by
 “ the decrees of the Fathers, especially the inferior holi-
 “ days, occurring in the summer time, when there was a
 “ necessity of providing for the winter, because those days
 “ were usually spent in tipling-houses, and other places of
 “ debauchery, in gaming, dancing, drinking, swearing,
 “ blaspheming the name of God, fighting, sometimes even
 “ to the committing of murder, robbing, plundering, and
 “ in short, all manner of infamous lewdness.” But to show
 that they meant no disrespect to the saints, they order that
 those days may be kept holy by the laity till mass is over,
 after which every one might follow his employment; and
 that the clergy should solemnize them all day in the church at
 the usual hours: but the festival of the patron of the church
 was excepted, which was to be celebrated all day as usual.
 The Reforming College most severely condemned the pro-
 fanation of the day of the Nativity of our Lord. Some of
 the laity and clergy too, it seems used to spend the night
 before that festival, and a great part of the day in gaming
 with dice. And if there be no mistake in the text*, (says
 L’Enfant) they played there in the name of Jesus Christ,
 and in the name of the Virgin. It was ordered, that if a
 clergyman was guilty of this impiety, he should be excluded
 from assisting at any divine office, and if a layman, that he
 should not enter the church for six months.

Of all the writers who touched on the abuse of festivals, none
 was more copious and vehement than Clemangis, in
 a tract which he expressly wrote on the subject. Nothing
 can give us a more sad and lively representation of the de-
 plorable state of Christendom in those times, in this respect,
 than the following extract from that treatise of this cele-
 brated Parisian Doctor, *against the institution of new festi-
 vals*, which deserves to be known:—“ Every one,” says
 he, “ may perceive with how little devotion Christian
 “ people now celebrate these holidays. Few come to
 “ church on them; many hear not mass at all; others hear
 “ but a part of it and go away. Some satisfy themselves
 “ with entering into the church, and taking there a little
 “ consecrated water, or falling down on their knees for a
 “ moment, saluting the image of the Virgin Mary, or of
 “ any

* “ Quidam satrapæ diaboli attentissima et molestissima intentione ludunt
 “ ad taxillos nomine altissimi ejusdem nomine puerperæ blasphemantur.”
 See L’Enf. *Hist. of the Councils of Constantinople*, vol. II. p. 383, 384.

“ any Saint, or adoring the body of Jesus Christ during the elevation. Few persons are present at the
 “ office of matins and vespers, and often the priest repeats
 “ alone with an under-clerk ; scarce one sometimes can be
 “ found to answer at the mass. Some go to their houses
 “ in the country, others go about their secular business :
 “ Great numbers resort to fairs, which now are never kept
 “ in a public and solemn manner, but on the most eminent
 “ festivals. Some are delighted with stage-actors, and frequent the theatres ; tennis-ball employs some, and dice
 “ very many. Festivals are celebrated by the richer sort
 “ with great pomp of apparel and magnificent banquets,
 “ but the conscience lies neglected and unpurged. As to
 “ the exterior, all is fair and garnished ; the houses and
 “ floors are cleaned, green boughs are placed at the door,
 “ the ground is strewn with herbs and flowers : But the inward man partakes not in the exultation, but miserably
 “ pines away in its filthiness.—As for the *profane vulgar*, as
 “ they may fitly be called, holidays are not celebrated by
 “ them in the temples, nor in their houses, but in taverns
 “ and alehouses. They resort thither almost at sun-rising,
 “ and oftentimes they abide there until midnight : They
 “ swear, forswear, blaspheme God ; and curse all his saints ;
 “ they roar, they wrestle, they wrangle ; they sing, they
 “ rage, they shriek, they make a tumult, and seem to be
 “ as mad as bedlamites. They strive who shall overcome
 “ one another in drinking ; they drink merrily to one another, and eagerly excite one another to drink : and when
 “ they have glutted themselves sufficiently, then they rise
 “ up to play. How shall I relate the vanities of public
 “ plays, and spectacles on these days ? The crossways resound with dances. The villages and streets, the whole
 “ city rebound with the voices of singers, the shouts and
 “ clamour of dancers, the confused sound of the harp, tabret, and all other musical harmonies. Their minds being
 “ moved by the blandishments of laughter, the thumping of the feet, the glances of the eye, the gropings of the
 “ hands, and with the engaging sweetness of song and music,
 “ become effeminate, wax vain, and warm into luxury and
 “ incontinence. There whoredoms and adulteries are concerted, and assassinations made. And because the day is
 “ not sufficient for their lewdness, girls and espoused women are there oft-times voluntarily, or by violence, defiled in the darkness of the night. I know places, even
 “ famous

" famous cities, on which on holidays and Lord's days, it
 " is allowable for maids, in a public manner, to run abroad
 " to their lovers, or to their panders; which liberty they are
 " studious to preserve uncontrouled; as soon as the hour of
 " dinner is past, they speedily convene together, and march
 " in troops to their corrupters, with incredible wantonness
 " and impudence. We see in wakes or festivities of coun-
 " try villages, how harlots come from all quarters out of
 " the neighbouring towns, and country youths flocking thi-
 " ther by troops, who perhaps were free from such un-
 " cleanness all the year, casting away the bridle of modesty
 " in the solemnity of their patron, publicly commit adulte-
 " ry. [There youth hath first discarded its chastity: There
 " young men and children are corrupted, and infected with
 " an impure contagion. They continually provoke one
 " another to lewdness, and he that will not follow the rest
 " to destruction, is accounted a wretch, a sluggard, a good-
 " for-nothing. What heathen acquainted with sacrilegious
 " festivals, would not believe that the *Floralia* of Venus, or
 " the Feasts of Bacchus were kept, rather than the solemn-
 " ties of any Saint, when he should there behold such un-
 " cleannesses as were wont to be committed on the festivals
 " of these idols. Neither doth the filthy obscenity only
 " of Bacchus and Venus seem to be exercised there, but
 " likewise of Mars and Bellona too. For it is now a com-
 " mon fame, that it is an unseemly holiday, which is not
 " distinguished with fighting and effusion of blood.—What!
 " is the patron of the village to be worshipped by the in-
 " habitants on his birth-day in such a manner, that he may
 " be propitious to them all the year? What noble or
 " great man would not be displeased that his birth-day
 " should be defiled with such villanies? Who may not see,
 " how much better, and more commendable it would be
 " to observe no holidays than to keep them in this man-
 " ner? What heart is so estranged from reason and truth,
 " so perverse in error, as not to understand that it must be
 " a less evil to go to plow, to dig, or sow, or to do any
 " other handy-work, on the solemnities of the Saints, than
 " to profane, instead of honouring their days with such
 " horrible obscenities? Yet if a man, oppressed with pe-
 " nury, be found to have laboured in his field or vineyard,
 " he is cited and severely punished. But he who is guilty
 " of these worse things shall want both punishment and an
 " accuser. St Augustine saith that *he would rather go to*
 " *plow*

“ *plow on the Lord's day, than dance* ; not that it is lawful
 “ then to go to plow, but because he who danceth offends
 “ more grievously, because dancing itself is oft-times a sin,
 “ and often draws men into occasions of more heinous sins.
 “ Think what he would have said of those other things
 “ which now are commonly done upon our holidays ?—
 “ What greater injury can be done to a Saint, than to dis-
 “ honour his birth-day, wherein he was carried to heaven
 “ and paradise, with such uncleanness, and with every
 “ such sacrilegious custom, whereby devils were wont to be
 “ atoned by their superstitious worshippers ? What do we
 “ think the ancient holy Fathers would say, who appoint-
 “ ed the solemnities of the Saints, to be observed in the
 “ Church for other ends, if they were now alive, and should
 “ see those vanities and counterfeit fooleries that are done
 “ upon them ? I doubt not but they would take care of
 “ the souls that are like to perish ; neither would they
 “ suffer such things on the holidays of the Saints, as were
 “ not permitted to be done in the *Bacchanalia* themselves ?
 “ Either they would recal the people by disciplinary cen-
 “ sure from such base practices, or would compel them to
 “ celebrate festivals with due decorum ; or, if they could
 “ not break the force of pernicious custom, they would ra-
 “ ther abolish the feasts themselves, lest they should be the
 “ occasion of so great wickednesses, which, as it may best
 “ seem to agree to the safety of souls, according to the va-
 “ riation of times and manners, are either to be discharged
 “ from observance, or else men were strictly bound to a
 “ more honest way of celebration, lest they should do far
 “ more hurt by being ill observed, than well emitted.”—
 To the objection, “ That though many persons abused the
 “ festivals, yet there were many others who celebrated
 “ them with devotion, and spent these days in prayer and
 “ good works ; and, therefore, it was not convenient to abo-
 “ lish them, but that even new ones might be added to them,
 “ to procure farther means of edification ;” this writer
 observes, “ That there is a great difference between the
 “ commandments of God and the traditions of men ; that
 “ the former cannot be abrogated by any human consti-
 “ tution, upon any pretence of profit whatsoever ; but as
 “ to ecclesiastical constitutions, though they have been ap-
 “ pointed for just and sufficient reasons, they do not oblige
 “ so indispensably, but that they may often be changed
 “ with respect to times, places and customs, by the uni-
 “ versal Church, or even by particular churches ; that the
 “ Church

“ Church had abolished the vigils which had formerly
 “ been used in churches with much advantage to piety,
 “ because they became the occasion of debauchery *, where-
 “ of there are still remaining shameful examples in some
 “ places :” He adds, “ That, about four years ago, Michael,
 “ Bishop of *Antifiodorum*, had taken away, by his synodical
 “ decrees, many festivals which were wont to be celebrated
 “ in his diocese, upon the account of the disorders which
 “ were committed at them, and the necessities of the com-
 “ mon people, and that this retrenchment did not hinder
 “ pious persons from celebrating them with usual devotion :
 “ In fine, he concludes, that these disorders were almost
 “ inevitable, and therefore the occasions of them ought to
 “ be removed ;—that the Church should take care both of
 “ the good and the bad ; and if the Gospel enjoins rather to
 “ cut off our hand or our foot, than give offence to the
 “ least of our brethren, how much more reason is there
 “ then to take away a thing that gives scandal both to
 “ great and small †?”

John Langecroix, in like manner complains, that in his
 time Lord's days and holidays were for the most part spent
 in drunkenness, dancing, wantonness, stage-plays, and the
 like ; inasmuch, that the very singers and choristers of the
 Church did honour the sacred festival of the virgin martyr
 Cæcilia not in sackcloth and fastings, but in gluttony, drun-
 kenness, dancing and lascivious songs ; being more prone
 to all wickedness, than to the reformation of their lusts, or
 to devotion : and that almost all artificers and tradesmen had
 chosen some saint or other to be a patron to them, which
 saints they worshipped in a debauched Bacchanalian manner ;
 so that by this kind of worship and rite, men seemed to
 have relapsed to heathenism or atheism ‡. A certain prelate,
 in his book entitled the *Burden of the Church*, says, “ That
 “ the greatest part of Christian people spent the holy rest of
 “ festivals, not in meeting together to pray, or hear God's
 “ word, nor to perform any of the other duties for which
 “ they were first ordained, but wasted it in all kind of cor-
 “ ruption of good manners and of Christian doctrine,—in
 “ dances, comedies, smutty-songs, sports, spectacles, drun-
 “ ken

* The council of Eliberis early prohibited women from frequenting these.
 “ Placuit prohiberi ; ne fœminæ in cœmiterio pervigilent ; eo quod sæpe
 “ sub obtentu orationis latenter scelera committant.” *Can.* 35.

† Clemang. *Oper. Lug.* p. 143. &c. *De novis celebritat. non institutendis.*

* Longhecruc. *De Vit. et Honest. Ecclesiast.* l. 2. c. 11.

“ ken meetings, and all carnal works ; so that what Tertullian said of the anniversaries of the Cæsars, on which the public joy was expressed by public shame, may be applied to our holidays *.” Loccenius, after shewing that the chief heathen festivals were received among Christians, the very names which were retained among some of the northern nations sufficiently proving their Pagan original, (as *Ostern* among the Germans, and *Easter* or *Æstar*, that is *Venus*, among the English,) adds, “ That by this substitution of Christian in the room of abrogated Pagan festivals, Satan endeavoured to repair his loss, and to bring men back again to his worship, at least to get such religious days profaned by the blasphemies and wickedness of men : for what grievous crimes are often perpetrated upon them, experience, alas ! sufficiently shows †.”

It would be easy to produce a great catalogue of witnesses to evince the prodigious extent of these abuses in the Romish Church, even from writers of her own communion, both of an older and later date : if the reader desire more of them, he will find a few of them referred to below ‡.

The

* “ In festis pro divino cultu institutis visitamus taberna et choreas seu tripudia, spectacula et aliter circa illicita occupamur, exercitia spiritualia penitus detestantes.” &c *Episcop. Chemnens. Onus Eccles. c. 28. sect. 6.*

† Locen. *Antiq. Sueco Gothic. c. 5.*

‡ Salv. *de Gubern. Dei, lib. 4.*

Bapt. Mantuan in *Carmin.* Pothon Prumiens. Presbyter in *tract. de Statu domus Dei an. 1102.* Agrippa de *Vanitate Scient. cap. 59.* Vincent. Rellovecens. *Speculum Morale, l. 3.* Carol V. *Centum Gravam, cap. 37.* Erasmi *Annotat. in Mat. 11. 30.* Laur. Campegio Card. in *Decreto de tollendis abusibus, an. 1524.* Bellarm. *Concion. Oper. tom. 6.* Stapleton in *Prompt. Morali*, “ Quadragesimale jejunium jamjam incepturi, nos interea totos ingurgitamus, ventrique et abdomini servimus, quasi post hoc tri-
duum non Christo, sed veneri sacra facturi,” p. 347.

Serrarius in *Mach. c. 1.* “ Quemadmodum apud Romanos *Verrea* sublata, sic apud nos *Bacchanalia*, quorum res et nomen profanum, tolli penitus oporteret.”

A Popish Society in Flanders in *Imagine primi sæculi*, inveigh against these Bacchanalian days, whereby men seem “ a Christo ad Bacchum palam et aperte deficere, adeo posito pudore sensuque omni religionis in omnem licentiam crapulæ, commestationum, lasciviæ, flagitiorum veluti furialibus acti tædis sese effundebant.” They represent them as days “ pluribus flagitiis et impietati destinatos et quasi consecratos : In quibus pudet non esse impudentes, et nefas habetur nullum nefas admittere.” *Lib. 3. c. 9.* Cornelius a Lapide says, “ Turcæ, Hæretici, alique infideles rident Sabbatham, id est, festa Christianorum, dum ipsis lascivis spectaculis, ebrietati, libidini festis diebus vacantes, turpiter otiantur. Ita risit et subsannavit legatus Turcæ Bacchanalia Christianorum : Dum enim Parisiis ageret, videtque illis diebus miram Christianorum petulantiam et comotationes, ac statim post die cinerum eorum modestiam et gravitatem : Quid ait, accidit Christianis ?

To the above, the following canons and edicts may be subjoined. The Council of Basil in 1431, made an act of the following tenor: " This sacred synod detesting that
 " foul abuse frequent in certain churches, in which, on cer-
 " tain festivals of the year, certain persons with a mitre,
 " staff, and pontifical robes, bless men after the manner
 " of bishops; others being clothed like kings and dukes,
 " which is called the feast of fools, of innocents, or of chil-
 " dren in some countries: others practise masked and thea-
 " trical sports; others make trains and dances of men and
 " women for spectacles and laughter; the synod hath ap-
 " pointed and commanded all ordinaries, &c. that they suf-
 " fer not these and such like plays and pastimes to be any
 " more exercised in the church, nor yet in the church-yard,
 " and that they neglect not to punish the offenders." A
 Council of Toledo, about 1473, made a canon to the same
 effect, " because," they say, " a custom had prevailed in Me-
 " trapolitan, cathedral and other churches, that even in the
 " feasts of Christ's nativity, Stephen, John, Innocents, and
 " certain other holidays, yea, in the solemnities of new
 " masses during divine service, stage-plays, mummeries,
 " monsters, spectacles, as also many indecent fictions are
 " introduced into the churches; tumults also, and filthy
 " songs, and scoffing speeches are uttered, whereby divine
 " service is hindered, and the people rendered indevout."

Y

To

" *Christianis? heri videbantur ebrii et insani, hodie videntur sobrii et
 " sani. Quis est ille cinis tantæ virtutis, qui fronte eorum aspersus, mira
 " metamorphosin ex stultis sapientes, ex petulantibus modestos, ex lascivis ca-
 " stos reddidit?* Cur enim quod dilectus repudiat, non irrideat inimicus?
 " ait S. Bernardus." *In Thren. c. 1.*

Mariana, the Spanish Jesuit, in his book *de Rege*, passes the following
 censures; " Qua ergo fronte histriones de foro raptos e publicis diversoriis
 " in templum Christiani inducent, ut per eos sacra festorum lætitia augeantur?
 " Sed objicis fortasse. eos in templis non in turpibus argumentis versari, sed
 " sacras historias referre; quod utinam verum esset, et non potius ad mo-
 " vendum populi risum, obscenissima quoque acclitarent. Et est æcerbum
 " negare non posse, quod sit turpe confiteri. Scimus sæpe in sanctissimis
 " templis inter fabuli actus, chori ad instar adulterorum furta, amores turpes
 " recitari, ut honestissimus quisque ea spectacula vitare debeat, si decori et
 " pudori consultum velit. Et putabimus tamen quæ a modestis hominibus
 " fugiuntur ea cœlestibus esse grata? Ego crediderim potius quasi sordes et
 " religionis ludibria, hos omnes ludos a sanctissimis templis esse exterminan-
 " dos, ac imprimis publicos histriones. — Qui enim conveniat ab hominibus
 " turpibus divorum res gestas referri, eosque Francisci, Dominici, Magda-
 " lenæ, Apostolorum, ipsius etiam Christi personas repræsentare? An non
 " id sit cœlum terra, aut cœno potius, sacra profanis miscere? Si duorum
 " optio danda esset, mallet ab histrionibus profanas fabulas agi, quam sa-
 " cras historias, &c."

To an act passed in the synod at Sienna in 1524, on the same subject, we find this preamble; "because the devotion of Christians now waxing cold, we have understood, through the multiplication of holidays, that the people given to idleness and vain discourse, do, on these days, addict themselves more to drunkenness, surfeiting, plays and wantonness, than to divine things, therefore," &c. About two years after this, another synod in France enacted; "On holidays, let matters of judicature, hearing of causes, sales, merchandise, luxury, drunkenness, plays and fairs cease: In the feast of St Nicholas, Katharine, Innocents, or any other day, let not scholars or clergymen, act any foolish or ridiculous thing in the church, or permit others to do it: and let the clothes of those who act the scenical persons of Innocents or fools, be cast out of the church. Because the staves of the fraternities are wont to be carried about, preceded by stage-players, fiddlers, with timbrels, most unbecoming the honour of God and the saints; for these musical instruments stirring up the hearers rather to capering and dancing, than to devotion, ought not to precede their images fastened in the staves of the fraternities; therefore," &c. "And because in fraternities rightly constituted at first, but declining afterwards to worse, many things are seen to be committed altogether contrary to honesty and Christianity; we ordain that in the assemblies of the fraternities no dissolute feasts be made, no toasting tending to drunkenness, no dances, or other things of a like nature, belonging rather to the feasts of Bacchus than to the Christian religion*." A Council at Cologne in 1536, enjoin, "That the people be admonished why holidays were instituted; that on these days all plays should be prohibited, all victualling houses shut up; and that all riot, drunkenness, all unseemly sports, dances, full of madness, wicked conversation, base songs, and in brief, all luxury be avoided." By another at Triers, *anno* 1549, it was ordained, that if any clerk or layman should rashly and contemptuously give himself to any of these practices on the great festivals, or should mix himself with such as are guilty of them, he should be punished. At the same time, the number of festivals was ordered to be lessened. A synod at Mayence the same year, made a similar decree, and renewed the prohibitions of the synod of Toledo. We shall only add the constitution of the synod

* Boetel. *Decr. Eccl. Gal.* l. 6.

synod of Paris in 1557, upon this subject; " The Church
 " hath added other holidays to Lord's days, that we might
 " be mindful of the benefits bestowed on us by God and his
 " saints; that we might follow the examples of the saints,
 " that we might devote ourselves to prayer, and not to idleness,
 " and plays, dances, intemperance, and vain discourses;
 " therefore, let all rectors of churches admonish their parishioners, &c. We reject those fraternities which are
 " made for the most part for rioting and drunkenness:—
 " We strictly inhibit, under pain of excommunication, and
 " an arbitrary mulct, the carrying about of staves with images
 " to the houses of laymen, with a company of priests,
 " of women, and players; and especially prohibit clergy-
 " men from joining with such assemblies, or assenting to
 " them by any means."

By a statute of Edward III. it appears, that holidays were then kept in playing at dice, bowls, and all manner of pastimes. Charles IX. and Henry III. of France, found it necessary to prohibit theatrical entertainments, dancing, &c. on the Sabbath, and the annual festivals, under pain of imprisonment, and other penalties. Since their time, the princes of Germany, and others, have endeavoured, by authority, to remedy the inveterate distemper of festival-licentiousness. But it hath always proved too violent to be restrained, whether by secular or ecclesiastical laws. From the accounts we have of modern Europe, from writers and authorities of more recent date, it appears, that it goes on in this respect much at the old rate; if it be not rather advanced to a higher, though a more refined degree of corruption.

If we turn to other regions, which never acknowledged the yoke of Rome, we will find as little of the spirit of Christian wisdom or sobriety, and the same idleness, folly and dissoluteness appearing in the solemnization of their feasts. In the East, the Coptic Christians on the feast of Epiphany, perform a solemn benediction of the waters. After mid-night service, and some previous lessons, the patriarch, in his pontifical vestments, mixes the water, and stirs it several times cross-ways with his pastoral staff; and when the benediction is duly performed, the people plunge themselves into it, without any regard to decency or modesty in their behaviour. They have a festival called the *Apparition of Saints*, in which they imagine sometimes they see the appearance of a man on horseback, who is worshipped

ped by them as St George. This apparition makes its appearance three days together in the church of Gemiana : and the devotions of the people consist in loud acclamations of joy, and hymns sung in commemoration of the saints, which are succeeded by all sorts of diversions and festivity. The same people, on the 12th of June, observe the feast of the Exaltation of the cross : After they have assembled in the church of Cairo, and consecrated a cross, they carry it in solemn procession to the banks of the river, where it is incensed three times, and then thrown into the Nile, as an acknowledgment that all the benefits of creation and providence proceed from the Divine Being. In ancient times of Paganism, a virgin was thrown into this river, to which this may be the substitute. If the character given of the sect called the *Druses* by some authors be true, they are guilty of crimes still more shocking. At their most solemn festivals, they lie together promiscuously, fathers with their daughters, and brothers with their sisters *.

The Greek Christians in general keep their festivals with much riot, mirth and drunkenness, in which their priests often set the example. In Russia, previous to their Lent, they have a sort of Carnival, which lasts eight days, called the *Butter-week* : during which they are guilty of the most outrageous excesses in drinking, which is accompanied with all sorts of crimes ; so that it is dangerous for any sober person to pass along the streets : and murders are then so frequent, that there is seldom a morning in which they do not find dead bodies lying in the streets. Drinking, we are told, was prohibited to the Muscovites, under severe penalties, except at Christmas, Easter-Whitsunday, and certain other feasts of saints, especially of Nicholas their patron, and of the Virgin Mary, Peter and John, when like men let loose from prison, they quaff strong liquors, until they roll like swine, or fall to mutual quarrels, wounds and slaughter, with loud vociferations, like persons possessed : so that if they were always to enjoy the holiday-liberty, they would be in danger of exterminating themselves utterly †.

Perhaps

* Purch. *Pilgr.* &c.

† “ In *Nelewiki* oppido, quod cognomen ab infundendis poculis habet, omnibus extraneis militibus, &c. inebriendi vario potus genere, facultas concessa est, quod Moschovitis gravi sub pœna prohibetur, exceptis aliquot diebus in anno, viz. tempore nativitatis. &c. Interea vero, velut vinculis emissi, Bacchum et non festum divi advenisse gratulantur, et sacris non-
“ dum

Perhaps some will say, "Are not the revellings and licentiousness of holidays now reformed, as well as other abuses that prevailed, and still prevail in degenerate churches? Are they not observed among Protestants, with all sobriety, solemnity and devotion?" We wish it could with truth be affirmed. When were they formerly, or where are they now celebrated in the manner here supposed? Whatever partial reform may have been introduced; and whatever attempts have been made to change their noxious quality, and to defecate them from that superstition and licentiousness which adhered to them, it hath never yet been accomplished. Whoever will drink of the cup of a meretricious Church, must not expect to drink the wine pure, but mixed with dregs and poison: and these make it so sweet, and induce the vulgar so greedily to swallow it. Not a few of the advocates for Rome have upbraided the Protestants, for retaining their Bacchanalian feasts, and continuing to imitate them in some of their most reprehensible practices in this matter*. Nor have complaints been less loud among good men in that communion, of the continuation of the abuses along with the days; of which many instances might be adduced, from writers both abroad and at home. "Since the Pagan Satyrists of old," says a divine of Switzerland, "did not keep silence, when they beheld such games; much less should the preachers and doctors of Christian churches remain mute on this head, but ought seasonably to insist, that this wickedness may be removed from the church of Christ: Let them sharply reprove and chide those who refuse to relinquish it. This is indeed done by many faithful pastors, but alas! there are few who will suffer themselves to be corrected: But God will some time or other interpose, and purge his church of these and such like wickednesses, though by the excision of many †." Lavater, of the same nation, in 1588, exclaimed, "What shall I say of
" our

"dum peractis, velut sues vario potus genere obruti, temulenti, ebriique
"identidem vociferantes, seque velut obiecti mutuo cædentes et contumeliis
"variis afficientes vagantur," &c. Guagninus, *Rer. Polon. tom. 2.*

* Ex pontificiis Hosius, Corn. a Lapide et Froymundus Theologus Lovaniensis, nostris exprobrant quod celebrationem Bacchanalium, aliorumque hilariorum retinuerint, abolitis festis, jejuniis. Ex Lutheranis Casp. Finckius in hoc conspectario; peccant igitur illi, qui in Bacchi quasi honorem et memoriam celebrant quotannis Bacchanalia, &c. Voet. de Bacchanal. p. 3. p. 1334.

† Hospiman, *De festis Christian. c. 14.*

“ our Saturnalia, our Bacchanalia, Urbanalia, Martinalia,
 “ and feasts of dedication, which after the manner and cu-
 “ stom of the Heathens, are wont to be observed by us with
 “ the greatest madness and fury ?”

While something like Christian piety characterized the bishops and other teachers of the Church of England, they frequently lamented, and freely reprovèd the licentiousness of these times. Thus did Latimer, Hooper, Babington, Downham, Andrews, Williams, Perkins, Dod, and men of that stamp. Mr Stubs, in his *Anatomy of Abuses*, takes particular notice of these “ infernal profanenesses,—of that
 “ licentious liberty which men now take unto themselves
 “ more than at other seasons.” Another old serious writer thus represents the disorders of his age. “ By such infa-
 “ mous persons as players, much time is lost, and many
 “ days of honest travel are turned into vain exercises; youth
 “ corrupted, the Sabbath profaned.—It was ordained in
 “ Rome, by the Emperor Trajan, that the Romans should
 “ observe but twenty-two holidays throughout the whole
 “ year: For he thought, without doubt, that the gods were
 “ more served on such days as the Romans did labour, than
 “ on such days as they rested, because the vices were more
 “ then which they did commit, than the sacrifices they did
 “ offer. And trust me, I am of that opinion, that the
 “ Lord is never so ill-served as on the holidays. For then
 “ hell breaks loose. Then we permit youth to have their
 “ swing; and when they are out of the sight of their ma-
 “ sters, such government have they of themselves, that
 “ what by ill company they meet withal, and ill examples
 “ they learn at plays, I fear me, I fear me, their hearts
 “ are more alienated from virtue in two hours, than again
 “ may well be amended in a whole year*.” What revel-
 lings and profanity prevailed in many parts of the kingdom,
 through Wakes, May-games and holiday-sports, in the
 reigns of James and Charles I. and his son; what counte-
 nance they received from court, and from courtly Anti-pu-
 ritan bishops, with the complaints made upon that head by
 the better part of the nation, may be learned from the hi-
 stories of that period. The pen of a Gerson or Clemangis
 never drew in stronger terms a description of these ungodly
 practices, than was given by the zealous Mr Prynne, who
 felt so severely the force of Star-chamber tyranny, and
 Laudean

* *Blast of Retreat from Plays*, Lond. 1580.

Laudean vengeance, for censuring too freely these and other fashionable abuses of his time *.

This

* “ Alas into what atheistical times are we now relapsed ! Into what a stupendous height of more than Pagan impiety are we now degenerated, when stage-plays, the very chief pomps and ornaments of the most execrable Pagan idols festivities, are thought the necessary attendants of our most holy Christian solemnities, when, as we cannot sanctify a Lord’s day, observe a 5th of November, or any other day of public thanksgiving, nor yet celebrate an Easter, a Pentecost, much less Christmas, (as we phrase it), in a plausible pious sort, as too many Paganising Christians now contend, without drinking, roaring, healthing, dicing, carding, dancing, masks, and stage-plays, which better become the sacrifices of Bacchus, than the incarnation, the resurrection of our blessed Saviour, which are most execrably profaned with these Bacchanalian pastimes. What pious Christian heart bleeds not with tears of blood, when he beholds the sacred nativity of his spotless Saviour transformed into a festivity of the foulest devils ? When he shall see the blessed Jesus, who came to redeem men from their sins, entertained, honoured, courted, served like a devil, yea rather crucified and nailed to his cross again, with nought else but desperate notorious sins, by an unchristian crew of Christians, I might say Pagans or incarnate devils, who, during all the sacred time of his nativity, are more especially, and that professedly too, a most impure people, zealous of nothing but of stage-plays, dicing, dancing, healthing, rioting, and such evil works as would make the very lewdest Pagans to blush for shame.—On this feast the devil hath commonly more professed public service done him, than all the year beside. For may I not write of our English cities and country villages in the Christmas season, as Salvian did of Rome ; *Video quasi scatulentam vitiis civitatem ; video urbem omnium iniquitatem generi fervientem, plenam quidem turbis, sed magis vitiis ; vincentes se invicem homines nequitia flagitiorum suorum, alios impuritate certantes, alios vino languidos, alios cruditate discentos, cunctos vanò luxus marcore perditos, sed pene omnes una errorum morte prostratos : non omnes quidem vinolentia temulentos, sed omnes tamen peccatis ebrios. Pospulos putares non sani status, non sui sensus, non animo incolumes non gradu, quasi in morem baccharum crapula catervatim, intervientes.*—Those who are temperate and abstemious at all other times, prove epicures and drunkards then. Those who make conscience to re-deem all other seasons, deem it a point of Christianity to mispend all this, eating, drinking, and rising up to play, whole days and nights together. Those who are civil at other seasons, will be now debauch ; and such as were but soberly dissolute before, will be now stark mad, forgetting not only their Saviour but themselves. Those who repute it a shame to be disorderly any other part of the year, think it an honour to be outrageously disordered and distempered now, turning day into night, and night into day, setting no bounds to any lust. That which is not tolerable at other times, seems laudable to most men now ; that which, were it done at any other season, could not but be condemned as an execrable sin, becomes now a virtue, at least a venial crime. In a word, those who make a kind of conscience of drinking, amorous dancing, healthing, dicing, idleness, stage-plays, and of every sin, at other times now deem it a part of their piety to make no bones of these—of any profaneness now. Those who are constant in religious family-duties, now discontinue them : Those who remembered their Saviour and sins before, now quite forget them : Those who seemed saints before, turn devils incarnate now : Those who were reasonable men before, are metamorphosed into beasts or monsters now : Those who were formerly good, at least in outward shew, do now
“ turn

This festivity received a temporary check from the spirit of reformation which began to prevail in England, and the mirth was changed into mourning, by the scenes of public calamities and blood which succeeded. But it revived with greater force and frenzy than before, upon the return of the exiled monarch who brought so many laughing evils in his train. Carousing and excess of riot now became a test both of loyalty and orthodoxy. No wonder though the people indulged themselves in these, when they were taught both by the doctrine of their newly repaired Church, and the voice of public edicts, that carnal diversions and pleasures belonged to the right sanctification of days, as holy to the Lord. The act which set apart the 29th of May, "as a holiday to the Lord for ever," while it discharged all servile work, and appointed it to be employed in prayer, preaching and thanksgiving, yet at the same time enjoined, that "the remaining part of the day should be spent in lawful diversions, suitable to so solemn an occasion." What these lawful diversions were, the day did declare sufficiently, and experience since hath made it evident what best suit such a solemn occasion. Nor were the excesses confined to that day: However exuberant their joy might be in it, yet they reserved a sufficient fund for the due celebration of the other solemn times, after the wonted manner. In a tract published a few years after the Restoration, the author expresses himself thus: "The love-feasts were, by the authority of the Apostles themselves, long and laudably used in the Churches, but because of their abuse, the Apostles judged they ought to be laid aside. And if he dealt thus with them, what would he have done, do you think, with our Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide solemnities, wherein men drown themselves in all manner of riotousness and licentiousness, as if they were then at absolute liberty, and not under any law, save what ei-

"ther

"turn bad, and all who were bad before, prove now ten times worse: And all under this pretence of solemnizing Christ's nativity. Thus do we crucify our blessed Saviour in his very cradle. Should Turks and infidels behold our Bacchanalian Christmas-extravagancies, would they not think our Saviour to be a glutton, an epicure, a wine-bibber, a devil, a friend of publicans and sinners; yea a very Bacchus, a god of dissoluteness, drunkenness and disorder, since his nativity is thus solemnized by his followers, who are never so dissolutely, so exorbitantly debauched in all kinds, as in this his festival?" &c. &c. Prynne's *Histrio-Mastix*, p. 743.
Œc. Lond. 1633.

“ther the emptiness of their purses, or weakness of their appetites do give them *?”

Since the revolution the unholiness of holidays seems not to have greatly abated. The modern authors of festival-sermons, though they are not for ordinary very scrupulous adherents to historic truth, are obliged, now and then to make this concession. The prelate who took for his text, on one of these occasions, *Is. v. 11. 12.* “Wo unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, that continue until night, till wine inflame them; and the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts: but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands;” and who calls his sermon from it, the *Right manner of keeping Christmas*, seems unawares to have hit upon the right manner of it, if common and invariable practice may be of any use for judging what is right in this matter. He seems to be sufficiently sensible, that the generality of people are ever disposed to keep close to the mode of celebration mentioned in the text, as right, whatever he or others might say to the contrary. “This I call a charge laid against them, not only of intemperance and sensuality, but likewise of profaneness and irreligion: for it seems to be here intimated that the intemperance and sensuality, which they allowed themselves in, was at such times as were specially designed and appointed by God for a religious commemoration of his benefits; they regard not the work of the Lord, *i. e.* that work of God in memory of which those feasts were kept. There was mirth and jollity enough and too much; but at the same time, little or no religion.—This it seems was too often the Jews way of keeping their religious feasts.—And I wish I could say, that this was not also too often the Christians way of keeping their holy feasts; sure I am it is too too commonly *our way* of keeping them; and especially of this great festival of all, which we at this time celebrate, in memory of the greatest miracle of the divine mercy, that was ever shewn to mankind. On this festival, and shall I add too, in commemoration of this benefit, what more customary than for men to rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, and to continue until night till wine inflame them? Now, if ever, we look to hear the sound of the harp and the viol, of the tabret and pipe, this is

Z

“reckoned

* *Nehushtan*, p. 37. Lond. 1668.

“ reckoned the proper season for music and noise and merry-making : Now also is wine in our feasts ; this is the time, the time of the whole year, for good eating and drinking : But then our thoughts are commonly so taken up, and our time so much employed in these things, that we have no mind to, or no leisure for any thing that is good ; God is not in all our thoughts, not now, I say, when in reason he ought to be most there ; we regard not in our minds the work of the Lord,” &c.

One would think here, that Cartwright, Prynne, or some old Puritan had started up to make a speech and a motion for abolishing holidays. It might be expected that the next words we should hear, would be, away with them. But mum for that. The preacher was wiser than so, lest the mitre or something dearer should go with them. Hear him : “ But since the case is so, will some perhaps be ready to say, that this festival, however at first piously designed, is now so very much abused, why is it not rather quite laid aside ? Why should we continue the observation of a feast, which is so commonly, so customarily, nay, so constantly every year, (*anno 1644*) an occasion of much sin ? And time was, we have been told, and you may perhaps, some of you remember, when this counsel so far prevailed, that this day was by order observed as a fast, (*anno 1645*, &c.): Time was, when the churches on this day were generally kept shut, and the shops were ordered to be kept open ; and a sort of inquisition was set up against even those kinds of food, which had been most customarily in use at this season. But what warrant our then reformers had for this, from the pattern shewn to them in the mount, according to which they pretended to make all their reformation, I could never yet learn.”—Here, to be sure, was something like an objection, which we leave this dignitary, and all others who are engaged in behalf of the same worthy cause, to get rid of in the best manner they can : and, in the mean time, proceed to give some farther account of the modern British manner of keeping holidays, as I find it described in two periodical papers published in the course of this century, which will be allowed to exhibit, for the most part, a very striking likeness of living manners ; and whose delineations relating to this in particular, making allowance for the nature and humour of the works, will not be found fictitious or greatly exaggerated.

The

The first referred to is the Independent Whig, published in 1720; "Whatever does contribute to make mankind idle and less useful to one another, conduces so far to their want and misery. One holy day, strictly kept, robs the poor of more than a whole year's charity will supply. A little loose money picked up at the church doors, and afterwards divided between the parson, church-wardens, and a few favourite objects, will make but poor amends for the taxation of the nation, and of every person in it, with the loss of a day's labour, and profit of his trade; which loss probably cannot amount to less than 200,000 pounds, without having any regard to the extravagance and debaucheries committed upon those days, which often consume the acquisitions of a week, and render the common people listless, and unwilling to return to their labour again. I may therefore venture to affirm, that there is more charity in taking away one saint's day, than in building and endowing twenty colleges*."

"The duty of *penance* is according to certain churchmen, a very necessary duty: but there is another duty quite opposite to it, yet very necessary also; and that is the business and duty of *festivals*. These two may indeed seem contradictions to each other, and to the eye of un-sanctified reason are so; but where they are enjoined by church-authority, it is our duty to think them orthodox, quite consistent, and so to be merry or melancholy, and to weep or laugh just as mother-church commands us, in defiance of our constitutions and our understandings. We are to mourn on Good-Friday, because on that day our Saviour died; though, if he had not, we could not have been saved: And we are to take our belly-full of meat and mirth on Easter-Sunday, because Christ rose on that day from the dead; though it was impossible for him to have continued there."—"From what principle of reason or religion, do we find that we must work up our passions beyond their natural pitch, and endeavour to destroy the serenity and calm of our minds to do homage to the Deity? who will accept no service but what flows from a sincere and upright heart, elevated by a due contemplation of the divine perfections, and the benefits received from our Creator, or humbled by the consideration of human infirmities, and not intoxicated with various music, pompous shews, delicious banquets, or bottles
" of

* No. 27.

“ of brandy; nor depressed or sunk with mortifications,
 “ penances, fasting, or unwholesome diet; all which have
 “ nothing to do with true religion, though they have been
 “ always essential parts of every false one. Let us now see
 “ what sort of devotion these holidays produce. Idleness is
 “ the nurse of vice, and fills the taverns and the stews with
 “ many debauched customers, who, had they any thing else
 “ to do, or would do any thing else, might live as chaste
 “ and sober as any of their neighbours, that are so, because
 “ they are well employed. The common people think of
 “ a holiday with no other view, than that they shall then
 “ have their belly-full of ale, and rambling and idleness,
 “ Perhaps, in the morning, they hear a sermon, which is
 “ often calculated to drive peace and religion out of their
 “ souls, and to fill them with bitterness and rage against
 “ those who provoke them, by being sober subjects, and con-
 “ scientious Christians. Next comes a gluttonous meal, and
 “ a load of liquor, which adds fresh fuel to the orthodox zeal
 “ which they imbibed in the morning, and inspires them
 “ to deface or demolish places sacred to God’s worship, and
 “ to insult and affront every sober man, who has not been
 “ at the brandy-shop, and will not pronounce *hell* and *dam-*
 “ *nation* according to the word of command. After all
 “ this mischief and bravery, they have recourse to more li-
 “ quor, over which they swear and triumph upon their
 “ late orthodox exploits. Probably, at last they vomit
 “ up their devotions in Drury-Lane, and finish the ho-
 “ liday in a bawdy-house. Next morning, the sum of
 “ the reckoning will be this; they have lost a day, and
 “ with it their innocence; they have risked their health
 “ and their souls: they have provoked God, and in his
 “ name, committed outrages upon their neighbours *”

This, bating some circumstances peculiar to the begin-
 ning of this century, will not be inapplicable to the present
 times. The other, of a more recent date, gives us the fol-
 lowing familiar view of our Protestant British Carnival:
 “ Those old-fashioned mortals, who have been accustomed
 “ to look upon this season with extraordinary devotion, I
 “ leave to con over the explanation of it in Nelson: It shall
 “ at present be my business to shew the different methods
 “ of celebrating it in these kingdoms. With the general-
 “ ty, *Christmas* is looked upon as a festival in the most li-
 “ teral sense, and held sacred by good eating and drinking.

“ These

* *Indep. Whig*, No. 38.

“ These indeed are the most distinguishing marks of Christ-
 “ mas : The revenue from the malt-tax, and the duty up-
 “ on wines, &c. on account of these twelve days, has al-
 “ ways been found to increase considerably : and it is im-
 “ possible to conceive the slaughter that is made among the
 “ poultry and the hogs, in different parts of the country,
 “ to furnish the prodigious number of turkeys, and chins,
 “ and collars of brawn, that travel up, as presents, to the
 “ metropolis on this occasion. The jolly cit looks upon
 “ this joyous time of feasting, with as much pleasure as on
 “ the treat of a new-elected alderman, or a Lord-mayor’s
 “ day. Nor can the country farmer rail more against the
 “ game-act, than many worthy citizens, who have ever
 “ since been debarred of their annual hare, &c. These
 “ good people would look upon the absence of mince-pies
 “ as the highest violation of Christmas ; and have remark-
 “ ed with concern, the disregard that has been shewn of
 “ late years to that Old English repast : for this excellent
 “ British *Olio* is as essential to Christmas, as pancake to
 “ Shrove-Tuesday, tansy to Easter, furmity to Midlent-Sun-
 “ day, or goose to Michaelmas-day. And they think it no
 “ wonder, that our finical gentry should be so loose in their
 “ principles, as well as weak in their bodies, when the so-
 “ lid substantial Protestant mince-pie has given place among
 “ them to the Roman Catholic *amulets*, and the light, puff-
 “ fy, heterodox *pets de religieuses*. As this season used for-
 “ merly to be welcomed in with more than usual jollity in
 “ the country, it is probable that the Christmas-remem-
 “ brances with which the waggon and stage-coaches are at
 “ this time loaded, first took their rise from the laudable
 “ custom of distributing provisions at this severe quarter of
 “ the year to the poor. But these presents are now seldom
 “ sent to those who are really in want of them, but are de-
 “ signed as compliments to the great, from their inferiors,
 “ and come chiefly from the tenant to his rich landlord, or
 “ from the rector of a fat living, as a kind of tithe to his
 “ patron. Nor is the old hospitable English custom of
 “ keeping open house for the poor neighbourhood any long-
 “ er regarded. The servants now swill the Christmas-ale
 “ by themselves in the hall, while the squire gets drunk,
 “ with his brother fox-hunters, in the smoking-room.

“ There is no rank of people so heartily rejoiced at the
 “ arrival of this joyful season, as the order of servants,
 “ journeymen, apprentices, and the lower sort of people in
 “ general.

“ general. No master or mistress is so rigid, as to refuse
 “ them an holiday; and by remarkable good luck, the
 “ same circumstance which gives them an opportunity of
 “ diverting themselves, procures them money to support it
 “ by the tax which custom has imposed upon us in the ar-
 “ ticle of Christmas-boxes.—The Christmas-box was for-
 “ merly the bounty of well disposed people, who were wil-
 “ ling to contribute something towards rewarding the indu-
 “ strious, and supplying them with necessaries. But the
 “ gift is now almost demanded as a right; and our journey-
 “ men, apprentices, &c. are grown so polite, that, instead
 “ of reserving it for its original use, their ready cash serves
 “ them only for present pocket-money; and instead of vi-
 “ siting their friends and relations, they commence the fine
 “ gentlemen of the week. The sixpenny hop is crowded
 “ with ladies and gentlemen from the kitchen; the Syrens
 “ of Catharine-street charm many a holiday gallant into
 “ their snares; and the play-houses are filled with beaux,
 “ wits and critics from Cheapside and White Chapple. The
 “ barrows are surrounded with raw lads setting their half-
 “ pence against oranges; and the greasy cards, and dirty
 “ cribbage-board employ the genteeler gamesters in every
 “ ale-house. A merry Christmas has ruined many a pro-
 “ mising young fellow, who has been flush of money at the
 “ beginning of the week, but before the end of it has com-
 “ mitted a robbery on the till for more. But in the midst
 “ of this general festivity, there are some, so far from gi-
 “ ving into any extraordinary merriment, that they seem
 “ more gloomy than usual, and appear with faces as dismal
 “ as the month in which Christmas is celebrated. I have
 “ heard a plodding citizen most grievously complain of the
 “ great expence of house-keeping at this season, when his
 “ own and his wife’s relations claim the privilege of kin-
 “ dred, to eat him out of house and home, &c.—Others
 “ who used to be very merry at this season, have within
 “ this year or two been quite disconcerted. To put them
 “ out of their old way, is to put them out of humour:
 “ they have therefore quarrelled with the almanac, and re-
 “ fuse to keep their Christmas according to act of Parlia-
 “ ment. I am informed that this obstinacy is very com-
 “ mon in the country; and that many still persist in wait-
 “ ing eleven days for their mirth, and defer their Christ-
 “ mas till the blowing of the Glaistenbury thorn.—As to
 “ persons of fashion, this annual Carnival is worse to them
 “ than

“ than Lent, or the empty town in the middle of summer.
 “ The boisterous merriment and awkward affectation of po-
 “ liteness among the vulgar, interrupts the course of their
 “ refined pleasures, and drives them out of town for the ho-
 “ lidays. The few who remain are very much at a loss
 “ how to dispose of their time; for the theatres at this sea-
 “ son are opened only for the reception of school-boys and
 “ apprentices, and there is no public place where a person
 “ of fashion can appear, without being surrounded with the
 “ dirty inhabitants of St Giles’s, and the brutes from the
 “ *Wapping* side of Westminster. These unhappy sufferers
 “ are really to be pitied: and since Christmas-day has to
 “ persons of distinction a great deal of insipidity about it, I
 “ cannot enough applaud an ingenious lady, who sent cards
 “ round to all her acquaintance, inviting them to a rout on
 “ that day; which they declared was the happiest thought
 “ in the world, because Christmas-day is so much like Sun-
 “ day *.”

Though in Scotland these annual revels have not the au-
 thority, either of civil or ecclesiastic law, yet, whether we
 have entirely got free of such follies, those can tell who are
 best acquainted with the scenes which present themselves in
 streets, taverns, and all places of public resort on these
 merry days, to say nothing of what passes in private houses,
 The worst part of these times yet remain with us. While
 the old are yet not removed, should new occasions of idle-
 ness and intemperance be introduced? as it may well be
 feared this Anniverfay will prove to not a few, in this age
 of dissipation; when religion has lost its awe; when even
 Sabbaths and sanctuaries are no longer regarded as sacred;
 when days of humiliation for sin and calamities are often
 converted into days of mirth and madness;—when not
 only newyear-days, fairs, weddings, and other secular oc-
 casions, are marked with drunkenness and riot; but even
 sacramental festivals and ordination-solemnities are too of-
 ten, it is said, disgraced with them too: And when, on
 some of these occasions, if common fame lie not, the leaders
 of the people shew them the example of shameful excess,
 and demonstrate that they are not proof against the intoxi-
 cating power of the bowl, and the charm of boon compa-
 nions and good cheer. For these, and such like evils, the
 land should mourn, instead of heedlessly toasting the me-
 mory of King William, or filling up bumpers in honour of
 the

* *Connoisseur*, No. 48. Dec. 26. 1754.

the Revolution. We doubt not but care will be taken to caution people against such abuse, and it will be well if the event shall prove that all apprehensions on this head have been vain. But will not the object of the day, and the joyful events it commemorates, tend to exhilarate the spirits, and excite to mirth; and may not some plead them in excuse? It has too much of the complexion of these days, in which bonfires, casts of liquour, discharge of artillery, noisy mobs and tumults, with various entertainments, constitute the most conspicuous part of the celebration.

But though none of all these things should attend it; though it should be wholly spent in the exercises of religion, yet this will not exempt it from the charge of abuse of another kind. If it shall introduce into the pulpit history and politics, or the Shibboleth of party, pompous declamations and panegyrics of mortals, or discussions of the rights of princes and of subjects, the evil will not be small. However commendable it may be to support the flame of liberty; however it may answer a good purpose to give free scope to political debate and discussion in political clubs, or parliamentary assemblies, yet this is not the proper business of the pulpit: Christian assemblies convene for higher purposes. For Ministers to entertain their audience with theories of government, and to inculcate their own political creed or *nostrum*, in the name of Jesus, is to forget the ends of their office. Grant that some hold far better principles than others; though one teach slavery, and another genuine liberty, yet both err from the scope of ministerial administrations: No politics, however pure, make the great theme of gospel preaching; nor can they tend greatly to advance the salvation of hearers. Whether the system be Locke's or Filmer's; upon whatever principles, or by whomsoever composed, whether uttered by a Sacheverell or a Bisset,—whether the production of Luke Milbourn, or venerable Bradbury himself, political sermons, want the dignity, the force, the savoury relish that characterise the most ordinary subject belonging to the doctrine of Christ.

Already we have had too many of these of a certain stamp, perhaps the pulpit, in no nation, has been so dishonoured, as in Britain, with such a shoal of dry, meagre, and inanimated, or passionate and furious, illiberal, and even blasphemous productions, under the name of sermons on public occasions. It may be remembered here, that the seditious sermon, entitled *Perils from False Brethren*, which
 set

set the Parliament, London, and all Britain in a flame, in the reign of Queen Anne, and which produced such sad effects upon the public interests and liberties, was none other than a 5th of November sermon. The Jacobites have long vented their fury and malice, and, from year to year, have poured forth their calumnies, treason and impieties; on a certain anniversary, more especially, they have been accustomed to crow over the friends of liberty. They have then embalmed the memory of their royal martyr with the fragrant spices of boundless panegyric. They have exalted him to the highest rank of Princes and of Saints. These flattering priests have yearly bemoaned their decoliated prince, in as mournful ditties as ever were poured out by the votaries of Thammuz, when they wept at the remembrance of their bleeding Adonis. Hundreds of such pious memorials, which seem as if they had been written in tears, and uttered in groans, will long remain, either as lasting monuments of the hero's virtues and fame, or else of the infamy of his panegyrists. The flowers of rhetoric, and the topics of praise, have already been exhausted in this cause. Continually have they hailed him as *thrice blessed*: His head has been encircled with the brightest diadem in heaven; and damnation has been dealt out freely on all who ventured to oppose his will and ruinous projects: In short, he has been often compared with, and, in some instances, preferred to the King of Saints and of martyrs.

Sed tempora mutantur: These themes are now become trite and obsolete: The names of *Charles* or of *James* no longer sound so mighty, and so charming as erst they did. The old cavalier rants will no longer be endured by an age tutored by Locke, and attached by whiggism. The Williamites and whigs must now therefore have their turn. It is time the stage should be left clear to them; or, at least, that they should be allowed day about, and word about with their adversaries and accusers. Now will commence the trial of skill between these rival parties, and the listening world must judge which of them can boast the happiest talents for panegyric, satire, or invective. The garlands which have been wreathed to deck the tory-idol, and the incense offered at that shrine, must henceforth be transferred to the side of the patriot King. Yet surely the Revolutionists skirmish on unequal terms. What is one day in 100 years? The *secular* must be changed into an *annual* holiday.

C H A P. XII.

Of the Ancient Games.—The Secular Games of the Romans.—The Papal Jubilee.—The Jubilee of the Lutherans.—Of the Reformed.

AMONG all Pagan nations, public festivals have constituted a great part of their religious ritual. The institution of these may be traced up to the most ancient times. The Egyptians are said by Herodotus to have been the first who built temples, and appointed solemn feasts in honour of the gods. When Israel conformed to the Egyptian idolatry, we find that Aaron, at the instigation of the people, proclaimed a feast unto the Lord: And when they had eaten and drunk in honour of the calf, “ they rose up “ to play.” The public games that afterwards were so frequent among the Greeks and Romans, were almost all of a religious kind. They were performed in honour of some divinity or deified hero, as a solemn memorial of some great event or deliverance supposed to be procured by their favour, or for averting some calamity impendent, and for procuring prosperity. They were accompanied usually with processions, and the bearing about the images of their gods, with sacrifices, and other acts of religion: And their sports, races, wrestling, combats, and butcheries, were considered as acts of homage, and grateful spectacles to their false deities*.

These

* Lactantius says, “ Ludorum celebrationes Deorum festa sunt; si quidem ob natales eorum, vel templorum novorum dedicationes sunt constituta. Et premitus quidem venationes, quæ vocantur munera, Saturno sunt attributa, ludi autem Senici Libero, Circenses Neptuno. Paulatim vero et cæteris diis idem honos tribui cæpit, singulique ludi numinibus eorum consecrati sunt. Si quis igitur spectaculis interest, ad quæ religionis causa convænitur, discessit a Dei cultu, et ad deos se contulit, quorum natales et festa celebravit.” *Divin. Institut. lib. 6. c. 20.*

So likewise Cyprian; “ Quod spectaculum sine idolo? Quis ludus sine sacrificiis? Quod certamen non consecratum mortuis? Græca illa certamina, vel in cantibus, vel in fidibus, vel in vocibus, vel in viribus, præsidēs suos “ habent varia dæmonia.” *De Spectac.*

Tertullian gives the same representation of them: “ In ludis quanta sacra, quanta sacrificia præcedunt, intercedunt, succedunt?” *Lib. de Spect. c. 7.* Varro, who wrote five books of *Divine Things*, employs one of them entirely concerning the *Plays*.

These games were not all celebrated with equal pomp and solemnity, nor at the same distance of time. Some of them recurred every year, and were, properly speaking, anniversaries; while others only, after the revolution of several years. Some of them lasted but one day, while others continued for three, four, eight or more days successively. The scenique games, in memory of the battle of Cannæ, lasted four days. Those appointed in honour of Castor and Pollux, in consequence of a vow made to them by Posthumius the dictator, were annually celebrated for eight days, as were those decreed by the senate in honour of Augustus: Those celebrated by Agrippa continued 50 days, and those by Trajan, after the victory gained over the Daciens, were protracted to the space of 123 days.

The Lycean games or *Lupercalia* were among the most ancient in Greece, being instituted by Lycaon, who first sacrificed victims to Jupiter above 1300 years before the Christian æra. The most famous in Greece were the Pan-Athenian, the Pythian, the Isthmean and Olympic. The first were instituted in honour of Minerva, by Erictonius and Theseus, and were distinguished into the smaller and greater, the former being observed every two years, the latter every fifth year, in the month called *Hecatombeon*, from the hecatombs of sacrifices then offered up.—The Isthmean were celebrated every three years at Corinth, in honour of Melicertus a marine deity, or Neptune. The Pythian were in honour of Apollo, for having killed the serpent, or the robber Python, and were celebrated in various places, chiefly at Delphos every eighth year. The Olympic, which so long regulated the computation of time, were kept every fourth year, said to have been instituted by Hercules, in honour of Jupiter Olympius. The Capitoline, among the Romans, returned every fifth year, being ordained in honour of Jupiter. After the defeat of the Gauls, Furius Camillus represented, that it was needful to return solemn thanksgiving to Jupiter, for preserving his city and capitol, and that games should be instituted with that design: The senate consented, and a college of select persons were established to regulate all the ceremonies. The Actian games, in memory of the battle of Actium, were represented every five years. Augustus committed the care of them to the pontiffs, augurs, *Septemviri* and *Quindecimviri*, the four colleges of priests.

But

But the most remarkable of all the Roman games were the *secular*, so called from the original design of celebrating them once in an age, either every 100th year, or 110th, as the utmost limits to which human life extends *. But whatever was the period first fixed for them, there was little regularity observed in that respect afterwards, but they were generally celebrated at shorter intervals, according to the pleasure or caprice of the rulers †. Some being desirous of the honour of celebrating them in their reign, they greatly abbreviated the time upon various pretences. So Claudius pretended, that Augustus had kept them before the due time, and so appointed them within 64 years afterwards; and as it was usual to send heralds through all the cities of Italy, to proclaim the time, and invite the people “to come to Rome to see what they never had seen before, and never would see again,” upon their repeating these words, according to the ancient prescript form, they were mocked by the people, because many persons were alive who remembered the games of Augustus, and some who had acted in them, were again brought on the stage on this occasion. Different accounts are given of their origin, some of them evidently fabulous; according to Varro, when many portents were appearing, and the wall and towers were struck from heaven, the books of the Sibyls were

* That these games were to be celebrated every hundred years, is supported by the testimony of Valerius, Varro, Antias, Livy and others; and this was the space of time which the Romans called *Seculum*, or an age. Other authorities are produced for the 110th year, particularly the registers of the *Quindecimviri*; the edicts of Augustus; the Sibylline verses, as found in the second book of Sozimus' history; and that of Horace in his *Carmen Seculare*,

Certus undecies decies per annos
Orbis ut cantus referatque ludos
Ter die claro, totidemque grata
Nocte frequentes.

Those who speak of them as returning once in a hundred years, may be supposed to use a round number according to custom, though not with exact precision; wherefore they were called *Secular*, as Censorinus thinks; “Non quod certo annorum spatio constanter celebrentur, sed quod plerumque semel fierent hominis ætate; ut multa alia, quæ raro fiunt, post seculum evenire, loquentiam consuetudo usurpat.” *De die Natali, c. 17.*

† The following account is given of the various times of their celebration, computed A. U. C.

The I.	in	245	or	298	The VI.	in	800
II.		305	or	408	VII.		841
III.		518			VIII.		957
IV.		605	or	628	IX.		1000
V.		736					

were consulted, which directed that they should celebrate the Terentine games to Pluto and Proserpine, and sacrifice black oxen to the incensed deities, which should be renewed every 100th year in the Campus Martius. According to Valerius Maximus, and other Roman writers, they were enjoined by an apparition in the shape of a man of a monstrous appearance, covered with a black skin, that suddenly started up, when the Romans and Albanians were about to join battle: The frightened Romans immediately built an altar under ground, and offered sacrifices to Pluto and Proserpine, covering it up again with earth twenty feet deep, which afterwards, in a time of a raging pestilence, in consequence of warnings by new voices and dreams, was opened up, and used for like sacrifices, and expiatory games, for three nights, performed there. At length Valerius Publicola, the consul, after the expulsion of the Tarquins, when the city was visited with a pestilence, publicly instituted these games, which, after having been neglected for some time, were restored by Augustus, by advice of the priests, and according to the prescription of the Sibylline oracles. The most solemn sacrifices were then offered to a great number of their principal divinities. By way of preparation for them, the XV. seated in the capitol, and in the Pallatine temple, distributed among the people, flambeaux, brimstone and sulphur, for purifying; from thence the people went to Diana's temple, carrying wheat, barley and beans, for an offering; and, after this, spent whole nights in devotion to the destinies. The games continued three days, and as many nights; the people assembled in the Campus Martius, and sacrificed to Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, Latona, Diana, the Parcae, Ceres, Pluto and Proserpine. The solemnity began on the first day with a procession, in which the Senate and Magistrates joined; the people were clothed in white, crowned with flowers, with a palm in their hands. The Emperor, with the XV. commanded three altars to be raised on the banks of the Tyber, which they sprinkled with the blood of as many lambs, and then proceeded to burn the offerings and the victims. After this they marked out a space to serve for a theatre, illuminated by innumerable torches and fires. Here all kinds of sports were celebrated, and certain hymns sung for the occasion. Comedies were acted in the theatres; foot, horse, and chariot races were exhibited in the circus; in the amphitheatre were combats of gladiators, and of savage beasts. Athletic exercises,

exercises, and Salic dances made part of the ceremony. They marched also to the capitol to offer victims; and in passing by the temples, and through the streets, they adored the statues of the gods, which were then exposed on beds of state. On the second day, the noble matrons went to the capitol to sing hymns to Jupiter; and, on the last day, 27 young boys and as many girls, sung in the temple of Apollo, songs and hymns, recommending the city and Roman territories to the protection of those deities whom they honoured particularly with their sacrifices. The secular ode of Horace was composed and sung on this grand solemnity, and affords a sufficient specimen of that sort of devotion. In it the several divinities are invoked in their order, with suitable requests presented to each. We have another composed by Catullus. These games continued occasionally, till they were abolished by the Christian Emperors. The Emperor Philip celebrated them magnificently in the 247th year of the Christian æra, which appears to have been the last time.

But the prince of darkness was too much honoured by such an institution, not to wish its revival. Accordingly, Popery, in all things the mimic of Paganism, thought not her glory complete, until she had restored it in a new form. For it is generally allowed, that the idea of what was afterwards distinguished by the name of the *Jubilee*, was first borrowed from these Roman games *, rather than from the Jewish solemnity, which returned every fiftieth year: Though it bears the name of the latter (and even that was not thought of at first) yet has it no resemblance to it, either in the time or manner of celebration. Here there is no release of bondmen, no remission of debts or pains, except of a spiritual kind, which are out of their power; no reversion of inheritances; no Sabbatical rest to the earth from

* The Roman writers themselves confess this. One of them, treating of this, declares; "Morem hunc, a profana ludorum superstitione ad verum minis cultum, uti alios complures salubriter esse traductum." Boeth. *Epo. Image Sæcul. Societ. Jes. diff.* 4.—So Polydore Virgil; "Pontifex Jubilæum centesimo quoque anno servari mandavit, quod fecisse videtur, ut populum cum primis Romanum ab inani Sæcularium ludorum celebratione ad verum solenne sacrum reduceret." *De Invent.* l. 8. c. 1.—To which we may only add Onuphrius Panvinus; "Erantque apud veteres, perinde ac est apud nos annus Jubilæi, in quo omnium delictorum veniam concedi liquet, quod et pontificum maximorum diplomata testantur." Referring to these Roman games, which he says were, "tanquam lustrum quoddam et expiamentum quo antiqui urbem Romani omnibus præteritis noxiis purgari et renovari existimabant." *De Lud. Sæcul.* p. 6.

from tillage. When compared with the secular games, the conformity is more striking, as is shewn in a variety of instances by Alph. Turretine, in his *Academic Questions* on this subject; and as may appear to any who are acquainted with their history. When Clement VI. wanted to change the time of celebration from the hundredth to the fiftieth year, then he took into his ghostly consideration, that “the fiftieth year in the law of Moses (which our Lord came not to destroy, but spiritually to fulfil) was a jubilee of remission and of joy, and the sacred number of days,” as the words of his bull bear*; and hereby was furnished with a plausible pretence for anticipating the time, and making it shorter by half. When once people, or their leaders, acquire a taste for high festivals, or *jubilees*, it is rather irksome to wait till the full expiration of a hundred years; every one would wish to have a chance of enjoying the consolation of one at least in his lifetime. Accordingly it happened in this as in the Roman games; the times were frequently changed, and the tedious interval, by little and little, abridged. When Boniface VIII. first published one in 1300, he was pleased, after the manner of his ancestors, to ordain the next at the distance of a hundred years. Clement, as we have heard, preferred the fiftieth, “after the example of the ancient law, that it might truly be a jubilee both in name and thing. Urban VI. fixed upon the thirty-third year, in regard to the mystery of the years of the life of Christ on earth, who is the spring of all our joy and Jubilee. At last Paul II. and Sextus IV. reduced them to the term of twenty-five years, which from thence forward was received and observed by common consent, and that too was done not without a mystery,” says Rycquius†; but what it was, I have not leisure to ask him. But besides the mystery there might be in the number 25, and the less incomprehensible mystery in the designs and politics of the Romish See, compassion to mankind surely required all this expedition in accelerating the nameless

* “Nos autem attendentes, quod annus quinquagesimus in lege Mosaiica (quam non venit Dominus solvere, sed spiritualiter adimplere) Jubilæus remissionis et gaudii, sacerque dierum numerus, quo in lege fit remissio, censebatur quod ipse 50 numerus in Testamentis, veteri quidem ex legislatione, novo, ex visibile in discipulos Spiritus S. missione singulariter honoratur; quodque huic plura et grandia divinarum adaptantur mysteria Scripturarum,” &c.

† *Tract. de Jubil.*

nameless blessings of such a happy time; which has been dignified with the epithets of the *holy year*; the year of reconciliation, of remission, of redemption, the year of grace, of peace, of indulgence, of salvation, and the like. It was then indeed that the Papal treasures, and the gates of Rome's paradise were laid as open as the three gates to which the Pontiff marches in solemn procession, with a silver hammer and holy water, on the eve of Christmas, when that great year commences; though not without some prospect of being repaid in some other coin, for all this expence. *Curia Romana non querit ovem sine lana*: and the *Taxa Penitentiaria* has carefully noted, that pardons are not to be thrown away upon any, except they be qualified; "Diligenter notandum, quod non dantur nisi qualificatis; pauperes enim consolari non possunt, quia non sunt." However, in this favourable time, these spiritual wares might be procured at a lower rate, and in greater abundance. If any then will but take a pleasure journey to Rome, and pay regular visits to certain churches marked out for that purpose, for so many months or weeks in said year, not forgetting to say a certain number of prayers, with confessions, a plenary indulgence is the least that will be offered him in recompense for his pains. If fastings, watchings, prostrations on the ground, creeping on bare knees on the hard stones, or up the steps of certain stairs, or a hearty whipping, be super-added, he may be more fully assured that he has earned a *jubilee* *. No miscreant, how great soever his crimes, need to despair, while that precious season lasts, in which the way to heaven is so patent, and the road to perdition wholly

* Of these meritorious penitential acts, which a certain writer says, strike all with admiration, we have from him the following picturesque description: "Quid dicam de supplicationibus, et se pie verberantium flagellationibus? En sane maximæ sunt omnibus ædificationi. Interdum per multos unius societatis nudis pedibus incedentes, sacco coopertos, capistrum collo gerentes, et divinam misericordiam alta voce implorantes videre est sanctis in tanta copia flagellorum vi effunditur, ut quemlibet ad pietatem moveant: Alii eo fervoris et excessus veniunt, ut disciplinarum loco catenis utantur, et hac ratione per civitatis compita spatiantur alta voce a Deo petentes ut sibi peccata remittat. Multi quatuor Ecclesias aperto capite, maximo silentio, et devotione invisunt. Alii genibus nudis a scala D. Petri ad sanctorum Apostolorum usque altare perreptant, et deinde per totam Ecclesiam spatiantur. Alii a sancta potentiana genibus nudis montem illum ad sancti sacramenti sacellum usque scandunt, et quamvis lapides minuti, quibus mons ille scatet, carnibus insigantur, nihil penitus de fervore remittant, immo inaudita patientia omnem hunc laborem Dei causa tolerant." P. Prost. *Spicileg. Theolog. de Jubilæo, cap. 5. dub. 6.*

ly blocked up *. If children break off from their parents, or wives steal away, without leave from their husbands, on such a holy errand, they are indemnified upon their acknowledgment; if the most infamous gains are employed for gaining a jubilee, they are accounted pure and available.

It is incredible, what a number of idle fools and strolling vagabonds this device hath allured to that rejoicing city in the days of her glory; the highways have been crouded with flocks of pilgrims, male and female; and the inns and hospitals have not been sufficient to receive them. At the first celebration by Boniface, in 1300, the conflux of people was prodigious: Nor does it appear to have been less at the next observation of it fifty years after; that convention was followed that year, by a plague throughout all Italy, so grievous that scarce ten of a thousand survived †. A hundred years after, on the same occasion, many were suffocated in the great croud; two hundred men were crushed to death on a bridge, and others falling from it into the river were drowned ‡. In that celebrated by Clement VIII. in the beginning of the 17th century, no less than 300,000 pilgrims were collected from France alone §. At that time the hospital of Philip de Neri, appropriated for the reception of pilgrims, lodged 444,500 men, and 25,500 women.

But besides these ordinary *jubilees*, kept regularly upon the stated time, which now, during the course of near five centuries past, since they first began, amount to the number of seventeen or eighteen, a method has been fallen upon to gratify the lovers of these festivities, by appointing extraordinary ones upon different occasions, and on a variety of pretences: As for the sake of a religious war, or for ob-

B b

taining

* In bulls for celebrating these years of grace, the Pope not only grants, but bestows power on any priest whom the person chuses for a confessor, to absolve from all censures and all crimes, "ab omnibus ecclesiasticis sententiis et censuris, a jure vel ab homine quavis causa latis nec non ab omnibus peccatis, excessibus, criminibus et delictis quantumvis gravibus, et enormibus,—etiam in literis die cœnæ Domini legi solitis contentis,—non tamen a crimine heresis." *Bull Urbani VIII. de Jubil. 1641.* A casuist of that church might well say, "Qui peccat ob spem absolutionis obtinendæ virtute Jubilæi, quamvis enormia quæque scelera committat, Jubilæum illi prodest; quia nulla fit hujus confidentiæ exceptio in bulla," *Dian. part. I. tract. II.*

† Crantzio, *lib. 9. Metropoh. cap. 43.*

‡ Plat. *Vit. Nicol. V. Sabell. lib. 5.*

§ Gualter. *Tabul. Chronol.*

taining peace, for celebrating victories obtained over the enemies of the Romish See, or for the reconciliation of a heretical kingdom, for a catholic massacre, or on account of plagues and calamities prevailing, and the like *. Particular nations have been allowed in latter times this privilege for themselves: as also particular societies or orders; witness the *Jesuitical Jubilee*, celebrated in 1640, with great pomp and luxury. And in some places the fiftieth year of the matrimonial, the monastic or sacerdotal state has been observed as such.

To such a height has the spirit and practice of jubilization arrived in Antichristian Rome by degrees. Though rather late in beginning, she hath at last exceeded her exemplar in point of frequency, and departed very far from the more moderate plan proposed by herself in the beginning. And perhaps, as one observes, somebody may be found who will limit these solemnities to seven years, in imitation of the Sabbatical year, or even within a shorter space, that the harvest of the court of Rome may become more frequent *. From the early superstition of visiting the places where our Saviour was born, lived and died; and of reverencing local monuments and relics relating to the

* Pius V. and Gregory XIII. published large indulgences to hasten forward the preparations of a naval war against the Turks. Gregory XIV. published the like in favour of those who should pray for the safety of the kingdom of France, when in distress, *anno* 1591; as did Gregory XV. for the safety of the Netherlands in 1622. Clement VIII. *anno* 1597, and Paul V. in 1608, appointed such a jubilee for the safety of the Romish church, the peace and concord of princes, and the extirpation of schism and heresies. Paul III. appointed one in 1554, on account of the meeting of the council of Trent. Paul IV. for the reduction of the kingdom of England to the obedience of the Romish see. Gregory XIII. on account of the Parisian massacre. In 1617, an *anti-jubilee* was published by Paul V. on account of the Lutheran jubilee kept that year. Alexander VII. for imploring the Divine assistance in the beginning of his pontificate, for the government of the Christian church, and peace among Christian princes. Another was appointed at the beginning of this century for procuring peace to Europe.

† Alph. Turretine in *Opusc. tom. i. p. 671*. The same elegant writer says, “Non uno die Roma condita est. Non simul ac semel adolevit superstitio. Variis illa gradibus, variis accessionibus crevit. Initio, quædam reverentia iis locis habita est, in quibus Christus fuerat versatus. Mox peregrinationes illuc institutæ. Tandem bella sacra indicta: Promissa, tum peregrinis, tum sacre militiæ nomen dantibus, ampla peccatorum remissione! *Indulgentiam* dixerunt. Interim, ut magna Palestina, ita nec minor Romæ, sanctitas haberi cæpit: et ad limina *Apostolorum*, reliquiasque ibi adservatas, magnus subinde factus concursus. Quod, ut promoveret Bonifacius, vir supra modum superbus, et aurum undique conquistum, plusquam dici potest, sitiens, opportune arrepta centesimi anni occasione, solennem hanc peregrinationem instituit.”

the history or mystery of redemption, in order to attain a more lively and devout recollection of them, did all this folly spring.

As the secular games were justly abhorred and abolished by all Christians, so all Protestants have condemned and some abundantly exposed the absurdity and iniquity of these pretended sacred years; whether they deduce their origin from heathenism or Judaism. The true Christian Jubilee, they hold, is that which is affixed to no times or places. As the author, last quoted, expresses it;

*Verum sua hæc habeant sacra, qui
Degenerem quæstum, sordesque secuti
Seducunt stolidum pietatis imagine vulgus*.*

“ Nobis sat est verum Jubilæum, Jubilæum Christianum, “ nullis neque temporibus, neque locis, alligatum; Gratia “ nempe salutaris, Libertas Evangelica!” It might have been thought that when the nature and effects of such institutions were duly considered, that none of the reformed would have seen any cause to attempt any thing that look like an imitation of them. “ Ye shall not be like unto “ them; nor do after the manner of the heathen,” was a divine, and a most wise and safe prohibition of old time. Yet some of them we learn, not only retained some of the old festivals, but took it into their heads to celebrate every century what they called the *Jubilee of the Reformation*. We are very far from bringing these into a parallel with the former. We are confident they must have proceeded from purer views and better principles, and were cleared from that mass of superstition which contaminated those of the Papacy. They, no doubt, meant to serve the interests of truth, and the cause of Christian liberty, by those very means whereby they had been formerly destroyed. But they might have learned the folly of sprinkling holy water upon unholy things, and consecrating every thing to the honour of God, which had been before profaned to the honour of idols. To cast out demons by Belzebub; and to expel a black demon by a white one, is not the way to do much injury to the kingdom of darkness. Those methods and counsels, how plausible however, as they have not been warranted of God; so, when used, have never been blessed with success †.

The

* Buch. *Francisc.*

† “ Veteres ecclesiæ Christianæ pastores plus æquo sese voluisse tum Ju-
“ dexis

The Lutherans appointed a *Jubilee* in 1617, in commemoration of the commencement of the Evangelic Reformation, a 100 years before, which some of their writers dignified with the title of the *Jubilee of Jubilees*. The Jesuits were moved to jealousy and anger, and in the *Anti-Jubilee*, celebrated at the same time, they took occasion, in their declamations, as well as in their writings, to asperse the character of Luther, contrasting him with their adorable Ignatius. Thus custom has hitherto been kept up by those of the Lutheran communion, and abundance of incense has been offered up to the memory of their reformer on those occasions, not only in sermons, but in poems and songs composed in honour of him. A celebrated divine of Utrecht, speaking of this institution, though he is unwilling to condemn absolutely the act of public, extraordinary and solemn thanksgiving, if freely undertaken by the Lutherans, without any obligation laid upon consciences, or upon posterity for the time to come; yet he finds fault with their attempting to defend it by arguments taken from the Jewish Jubilee, the days of Purim, and the thanksgiving of Israel in Psal. 135. as some of their writers had done*. Much about the same time, the Reformed at Heidelberg observed a day with the same view. The Protestants in Switzerland, also kept what they called the Jubilee of the Reformation in 1619, in memory of the happy change introduced into their states in the time of Zuinglius. At the last celebration of it, the ministers of Zurich informed those of Geneva, that the magistrates had a design of keeping it for the second time on the first of January 1718, inviting them to concur therein. This request was readily complied with, and the pulpits of Geneva, as well as Switzerland, resounded with the praises of the Protestant Church among the cantons,

"dæis tum Ethnicis accommodare: quod existimarent eos ad evangelium citius allectum iri quibusdam ceræmoniis, iisque apud utrosque familiaribus. "quam si adhærescerent puræ simplicitati a Jesu Christo institutæ et in ejus verbo comprehensæ. Unde multæ ceræmoniæ in ecclesiam irrepsérunt. "At experientia declaravit Deum non benedixisse huic consilio: tandem enim homines, omisso spiritali Dei cultu, exteriora prorsus amplexi sunt." Zadeel cont. Monach. Burdegal. art 13.

* "Quamvis autem factum publicæ, extraordinariæ et solennis eucharistiae libere absque conscientiarum aut posterorum in perpetuum obligatione "a Lutheranis susceptæ in probare nolim: minus recte tamen defendi censeo (uti a quodam concionatore Lutheranò defensum memini in Harmonia Lutheri et Lutheranorum) ex eo, quia Israelitæ celebrarunt jubileum, "Levit. xxv. 8. et quia dies Purim, Est. ix. et quia Israelitæ celebrarunt "Deum, Psal. cxxxv." Voet. *Disp. Select. par. 3. de Jubilæo*, p. 1382.

tons, and of their illustrious reformer : as we learn from the sermon of the younger Turretine, delivered and published on that occasion*. In Geneva, that same day, was the anniversary of the election of the magistrates of that city, which makes me conclude, that it was not very religiously kept, though they convened for discourses and prayers in the churches, as they were accustomed to do at their annual election, and on other week-days, without any design of solemnizing them as religious days.

When searching for a precedent in the page of history, the promoters of our *British Jubilee*, will no doubt, wish to have it sheltered under the authority of our venerable foreign reformers, rather than that of an old Sibylline oracle, or a bull of Pope Boniface. And it cannot be denied, that their example is more respectable, and an alliance with them more honourable. Yet it may be questioned, whether the precedents will exactly apply. Though our information as to their design in appointing, and the manner of observing these times, is not so complete as to enable us to give a positive opinion on this head, or to warrant our passing any severe censure upon them, yet I am inclined to think that the guides of these churches would hardly have proposed to settle any such institution, in the name of the Lord Jesus, or to observe it ecclesiastically, if they had not been moved thereto by the states they severally belonged to, the governing powers of which, it is well known, have always assumed by far too much power in reference to the external worship and government of the Church : and, an observance of this kind, they might consider as conducive to some political good. But, however, this may be, the question of right is not in the least affected by it : and although these secular Jubilees should be in all other respects similar, yet the state of these churches, and that of the Church of Scotland, in regard of the observation of days and times, is not a little dissimilar ; the latter having attained to something in that respect, which, with other Protestant Churches, is still a *desideratum* : as may appear from a brief survey of the condition

* In the dedication to the Magistrates of Zurich, he says ; “ Nous nous fimes un plaisir de nous joindre à vous, et nous regardames cette solennité comme nous appartenant presque autant qu’à vos excellences. Nos chaires ont retenti du nom de votre excellente eglise et de son illustre re-formateur.” In the sermon, speaking of the subject of the day, he says, “ Heureux événement dont nos chers voisins amis et allies celebrent aujourd’hui la memoire, et nous ont invités à la celebrer avec eux.”

dition of both, which shall make the subject of the ensuing chapter.

C H A P. XIII.

Condemnation of Holidays before the Reformation.—Sentiments of Protestant Reformers, and of different Protestant Churches in regard to them.—Of the Church of Scotland in particular.

THAT the practice of celebrating festivals was introduced into the Christian Church, without any precept of the Apostles, or any warrant in the New Testament, admits not of a doubt. The dead silence as to these in the books in which the whole system and laws of Christian worship are exhibited, is evidence sufficient that they are not of God. But, as if this had not been enough, the most positive and direct censure of them is recorded. Scarce any thing is more expressly condemned; not only in the general doctrine of our Lord, about human commandments and traditions, and the vanity of worshipping God in that manner; but also in the explicit censure pronounced by the Apostle of the Gentiles on this very practice by name; for which some might think they had then better authority to plead than any can since pretend to, namely the original institution of them by God himself, and the long approved custom of his Church. With such an authority against them, we need not be very anxious to know who have been for them, or against them, in subsequent ages. Not one of these, now or formerly observed among Christians, but was condemned before it was known. That they crept in by little and little as humanly-devised, but pious observances, and as voluntary acts of devotion, the imperfect remains of ecclesiastical antiquity give abundant reason to conclude. Hence the rarity of these festivals in the earlier times; the different customs of different churches with regard to them; and the frequent and warm controversies that soon broke out as to the times and manner of celebration, without either party being ever able to adduce any authentic apostolic rule or example to terminate their disputes. Tradition on both sides was equally pled; and mere church-authority in the end did give the decision. The occasional appointment of thanksgiving

giving and fasts common in the first ages, which we have noticed already, upon the testimony of Tertullian, is another proof of this. Nor were there wanting some afterwards who impugned the necessity of such observances, and found fault with the undue regard paid to them, as well as the various disorders which accompanied them. With respect to Easter, Socrates the historian, asserts, " That neither the Saviour nor his Apostles enjoined the observance of it by any law.—It appears to me, that as many other things crept in by custom, in diverse places, so the feast of Easter prevailed among all people from a certain private custom and observation; in so much, that not one of the Apostles, (as I said before,) hath any where prescribed to any man, so much as one rule of it; it was observed not by canon but of custom.—It was not the business of the Apostles to prescribe laws for the celebration of festivals, but to teach men how to live a life of godliness and piety*."

The same author proceeds to find fault with those " who count fornication indifferent, and contend about holidays, as it were for life and death; they despise the commands of God, and establish canons of their own."

To oppose this customary superstition, after it was generally established, was sufficient to procure unto a man the character of heretic: so it fared with Vigilantius of Gaul, and a Presbyter of Barcelona, who, in the beginning of the 5th century, wrote a treatise against the veneration which then began to be paid to the relics of martyrs; the lighting up of tapers in churches to their honour; praying to them, and celebrating in a superstitious manner their vigils and festivals: condemning all public vigils in the churches excepting on Easter night, with other evils of that time. This put Jerome into a great heat to prove the contrary, and he falls upon the poor man with a great deal of reproachful language, in a scurrilous letter written in answer to him, some passages of which, we have given in the course of this work. For this great crime, Vigilantius has stood in the list of heretics unto this day.

We have a remarkable testimony given by Bede the British Historian, to the character of Columba, a Presbyter, who came over from Ireland about the year 560, and spread the knowledge of Christianity in the northern parts of Scotland; and also to the Presbyters who succeeded him in the inspection

* *Hist. Eccles.* l. 5. c. 21. and 22.

tion of the Church in that part of the island, which shows, that festivals were far from being co-eval with Christianity, or equally diffused with it in the primitive ages :—He says, “ That Columba left behind him successors, eminent on account of their great continence, divine love and a regular government : that in regard of the *festivals*, they followed uncertain calculations, having lived in an obscure part of the world, the decrees of synods had not reached them ; and that they had only learnt what was contained in the writings of the Prophets, Evangelists and Apostles *.” Happy men, surely in this ! and happy had it been, if both governors and people of the Christian Church had learned nothing else.

During the great corruption of succeeding ages, when *all the world wondered after the beast*, though not a few condemned the excess of the growing superstition ; yet we cannot expect that many should be found endowed with sufficient knowledge and resolution to reject totally customs so specious, and so generally adopted. Yet in general this appears to have been done by the most noted opposers of the other errors and idolatries of the Antichristian Church, in the time of the grand apostacy. It made one head of the testimony of the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, these enlightened and faithful followers of Jesus in the darkest ages ; on which account, they were represented as a set of impious and heretical men, and persecuted unto the death. They not only condemned the invocation of saints, the worshipping of their images and relics, the consecration of churches to their honour, but also the celebration of their festivals ; considering all these as so many different branches of the same undue and forbidden honour. And not only were holidays in memory of saints rejected by them, but also all others whatever, as having been introduced without proper warrant, keeping no day as holy except the Sabbath †. The English reformer Wickliff, and his followers, seem to have entertained much the same sentiments. What he expressed on that subject in his Dialogues, intitled *Dialogus*, deserves to be recorded. In the 30th chapter of the third book, after having asserted the authority of the holy Scriptures, as the law of Jesus Christ, to be independent of any other authority, and as preferable to every other writing, but especially to the books of the Church of Rome, of the modern doctors,

* *Hist. Eccles.* l. 3 c. 4.

† *Leger, Hist. Gener. des Eglis. Vaudois*, l. 1. p. 120, 121, 123.

doctors, and the Pope's bulls; from hence he infers, "That we ought not to extol the saints either of the Old or New Testament, any farther than they have imitated Jesus Christ, and conformed to his law. Therefore," says he, "our Church has this very reasonable custom, that when any saint whatsoever is invoked, the words are addressed directly to Jesus Christ, and not principally to the saints; and that the solemnity or festivity of the day is to no purpose, if it does not tend to magnify Jesus Christ, and to make souls in love with him. From hence it is inferred, that if the solemnization of saints festivals deviates from this end, the motive of it must be avarice, or some other sin; which inclines *many* to be of opinion, *That all those saints days ought to be abolished, in order to celebrate none but the festival of Jesus Christ*, because then the memory of Jesus Christ would always be recent, and the devotion of the people would not be parcelled out between Jesus Christ and his members.—For," continues he, "there are people who hold the probable opinion, that it would be expedient, that men should only worship Jesus Christ, because as he is the best Intercessor, and the best Mediator, it would be a great folly to apply to others,—the rather because, as the covetousness and the self-love of a church increases every day, it may happen that the course of devotion may be very much turned by it, and that men may worship and serve a devil canonized for a saint.—Let every believer enquire why so many particular churches apply to the Court of Rome with so much toil and expence for the canonizing of some brother, and he will find the reason to be covetousness, and the ignorance of the true faith. Would any one chuse the King's buffoon to be an intercessor with him? The saints indeed are not buffoons in heaven, but they are less compared with Jesus Christ, than a buffoon is in comparison of a King*." Thus spake and wrote this celebrated Oxford-doctor, in the darkness of the 14th century. What a shame to find him, and others with him, entertaining an opinion more rational and more enlightened on this head, and breathing a spirit of purer reformation, even in that age, than any of the tribe of illuminated modern doctors and numerous clergy of the Church of England have yet attained to, unto this very day!

C c

At

* L'Enfant's *Hist. of the Council of Const.* vol. 1. p. 233, 234.

At the commencement of the Reformation in Europe, all who were engaged in that design, saw the absolute necessity of it, in that particular. The superstition and profanity of holidays, so obvious to all, frequently came under their severe censure; and they laboured for a reform thereof, though with different degrees of zeal and success. It appears, that Luther formed the design of a more entire change of the system of worship established in the Church of Rome, than was ever actually effected in his lifetime, or by his followers since; of which design the total abolition of holidays made a part. More than once he declared himself very plainly on that point: as in his book to the German nobility *, and in that *Of Good Works*, in which he says, "I wish that there were no festival among Christians, except the Lord's day." So that what countenance he might seem to give them, arose rather from a regard to established custom, and the disposition of people, than from any opinion of necessity or advantage. Yet by the Augsburg Confession, and in all the churches where this was embraced, several of these are still retained. Not a few individuals of that communion have expressed the same sentiments with their leader on that article, and have wished, that their reformation, in that respect, had been more complete.

The Churches of the united brethren in Bohemia, in the Account of their discipline and order, declare, "That besides the Sabbath, which they consider as of inviolable obligation, they celebrate the memory of the principal works of Christ, as his nativity, death, resurrection, mission of the Spirit, &c. on certain days; but these with the same Christian liberty as the rest, merely for a memorial, and for the sake of an opportunity of proposing the examples of the constancy and patience of the martyrs; and from thence to give some useful admonitions to the people; that after preaching and prayers are over, they may apply themselves to their ordinary works, as on other days †."

The

* Art. 5. "Consultum esse ut omnia festa aboliantur, præter diem Dominicum."—"Utinam apud Christianos nullum esset festum nisi dies Dominicus." *De Bon. Oper.* His sentiments may farther be gathered from his *Comment. on Gal.* ch. iv. v. 9.

† *Ratio Disc. &c. tit. Consuet. circa dies festos.* The Augsburg Confession also gives us a reason for retaining the feasts therein mentioned, "the maintenance of charity and tranquillity, that no man may offend another, and that all things may be done in the church orderly and without tumult."

The Helvetian Churches, in their Confession, reject all festivals instituted in honour of men and saints, but approve of the churches for Christian liberty celebrating religiously the memory of our Lord's nativity, &c. and the mission of the holy Spirit. Bullinger, in a letter to Calvin, in 1551, says, that the Church of Zurich formerly kept twelve more than these mentioned in the Confession; and that when the change was first introduced there was great altercation; but then there was great tranquillity among them. This Confession, having been sent over to Scotland, received the approbation of the Assembly in 1566, but they expressly excepted that article. The Hungarian Church, which adopted the Helvetic Confession, in their canons of 1642, reject saints days, but admit the observation of those retained in Switzerland. A like constitution was made by the Churches of Nassau in 1582. In some other places we find all festivals, without exception, at least for a time, abolished*.

Variations have taken place in the Genevan Church in this matter, since the commencement of the Reformation. At first, all festivals were abolished, and continued so for a time. This was the state of Geneva, when Calvin first settled there: but when he and Farel were tumultuously expelled from the city, holidays were immediately restored. The ministers of the Canton of Berne, it seems, had taken offence that the Church of Geneva made use of leavened bread in the communion, had removed the baptismal fonts, and observed no holidays. In their Synod at Lausanne, they agreed, that the Genevans should be required to change their practice in these respects: a refusal to submit to this requisition was one cause of the banishment of these eminent men: which was followed with a conformity, for a time, between the Genevan and Helvetic Churches. After the abrogation of holidays in Geneva the second time, to satisfy the ministers of Berne, who were still displeased, Calvin wrote a letter in his own vindication, in which he says, "Before ever I came to this city, their custom was to observe no holidays except the Lord's day. But the same decree that expelled me and Farel, brought in the observation of the same holidays that are observed by you. Which decree, though it was tumultuously and violently obtained

* "Nec vero hæc sola fuit ecclesia quæ nullas præterquam diei septimæ ferias retinuerit. Argentorati enim idem olim institutum fuerat." Calv. *Epist. ad Bur. Min.*

" obtained against us, yet upon my return, I observed this
 " moderation in reference to it, that the festival of Christ's
 " nativity should be observed after the same manner as it
 " is with you; and for the rest, they should be kept with
 " prayers extraordinary in the morning, the shops being
 " shut till after dinner, when men should be allowed to re-
 " sume their business again. But there was some head-
 " strong men, who, through preposterous malice, would
 " still dissent from the common custom. Therefore, as dif-
 " ferent usages in a well-ordered church are not tolerable,
 " and are apt to create suspicion among foreigners, that
 " people do not well agree among themselves, I exhorted
 " the Senate, that they would find out some convenient
 " way to cure this dissention for the future. Shortly after
 " I was surprised with the news, as a perfect stranger, that
 " they had passed a decree abrogating holidays. In this I
 " had no hand at all; I neither advised nor encouraged the
 " passing of it, though I am not much displeased that it has
 " so happened. Yet I would have all men know, that if
 " it had been put to my choice, I would not have given
 " my opinion for making such a decree: and yet I
 " must say, there is no reason why men should be ex-
 " asperated against us only, for using our liberty as the edi-
 " fication of our Church may require. On the other hand,
 " it is not fit that our custom should be a rule to other
 " Churches *." He says, " Though he could, upon his re-
 " turn, in a moment have disannulled that decree which
 " introduced the observation of the festivals, yet he placid-
 " ly forbore; only he could not but say, he thought it pre-
 " posterously ordered, to omit the day of our Saviour's
 " passion, whilst they kept his circumcision: This was
 " foolishly and absurdly devised by ignorant men. He
 " even took some pains to satisfy and calm those of the ad-
 " verse party, who still clamoured and cried out for the a-
 " bolishing of them; insomuch that they accused him for
 " being lukewarm in the matter. The dispute ran so high
 " betwixt the contending parties, that it came once to the
 " drawing of swords; which immoderate heat on both sides
 " he endeavoured to compose, by getting a decree made,
 " that holidays should only be kept in the morning, with
 " shops shut, and men be allowed to return to their ordi-
 " nary work in the afternoon. And thus it continued for
 " nine years; but that did not end the quarrel; for some
 " would

* *Epist. ad Haller, anno 1551.*

“ would have their shops shut, and some open ; which shewed that the old controversy was still on foot among them. This made him once more address the Senate, to find out an expedient for this evil of dissention ; but without speaking a word about abrogating these days, but rather commending the Senate for their moderation, in that, for peace sake, they had complied with the custom of the Helvetian Churches.” And he adds, “ When I heard that these days were abrogated by an ordinance of the people, it was so unexpected a thing to me, that I was almost astonished at the news of it.” It appears from the practice, as well as the doctrine of Calvin, in his Institutions, that though he complied with the public law and order, so far as to keep some few of these days, yet he was better pleased with the abolition of them. Both Farel and Viret had actively exerted themselves, in order to get rid of them altogether. Beza, in a homily on the Passion, declaims against the custom retained among Christians, of regulating certain feasts, according to the times and changes of the moon, which he emphatically calls *Lunatic* feasts, and a *Lunatic* Christianity *.

The

* Speaking of the council of Nice, he observes, “ Sed ita tamen decisæ quæstio fuit, ut istius mali radix, superstitiosa quædam, viz. festi, quod paschalis vocant, celebrandi necessitas minime fuit abolita. Quis enim eorum, qui quibus in rebus sit verus positus Christianismus, ex iis quæ discrete scribit Apostolus, Col. iii. 16. intelligunt verum esse, ac ne verisimile quidem sibi persuaderi patiatur, a Christianis fuisse præsertim Apostolorum temporibus, memoriam resurrectionis Domini, &c.—sic observatam, ut aliquam temporum et dierum distinctionem in ecclesiam Christianos reveherent, et lunæ cursum observari vellent, sicut olim pascha Judæis erat constitutum ?—Ad multarum feriarum effugiendum concursus quæ et superstitionis plenæ sunt, et publicis commodis incommodæ, ejusmodi festi dies in proximum quemque diem Dominicum recipiantur, ut hac ratione nec *lunatica* festa, nec *lunaticum* Christianismum haberemus : quod de reliquis etiam omnibus annuis diebus festis, quibus celebris alicujus facti Christi Dom. nostri memoria retinetur, dictum velim.” *Hom.* 18.

“ Quod utinam episcopi et pastores pro tam sollicita et superstitiosa dierum festorum distinctione, qui in immensum excreverunt et veterum patrum instituto penitus repugnant, uti jampridem agitantur, sedulam navassent operam in plebe fideliter erudienda, et ad Christi Dom. nostri beneficiorum usum revocanda. Sed quid agas ? In abolito fine cujus causa talis illarum maximarum commemoratio fiebat, habemus astrologicam et sollicitam festorum, cum mobilium tum fixorum quæ vocant, supputationem :—quasi in talibus observatiunculis summa Christianæ religionis vertatur : quasi speciosa prætextu omnia in ecclesia secundum ordinem gerendi novus quidem Judaismus sit Christianis obtrudendus, nova distinctio dierum fastorum et nefastorum revocanda ; quasi denique nos ab illis cæremoniis Judaicis idcirco Christus asseruerit, ut novis aliis longe onerosioribus et majore numero substitutis opprimeremur ; qua de re quidam ex melioris notæ patribus jam olim ante aliquot sæcula, sed frustra conquestus est.” *Ibid.*

The Reformed Church of France set the consciences of Christians free from this yoke. A summary of the doctrine of her most eminent divines and Universities, relative to this, we have given above. But, as they were obliged by the edict of Nantes to forbear working on the Popish holidays; in their Book of Discipline, (chap. xiv. art. 21.) ministers are enjoined according to his Majesty's edict, to exhort the faithful to give none offence by working upon these days. One Mr Joubert having appealed from the order of the Provincial Synod of Burgundy, allowing religious exercises to be publicly performed on these days; the Synod of Gergeau in 1601, after hearing, ratified the order of the said Synod, leaving the churches at liberty to have public prayers and sermons on the Romish holidays if they liked it. The second Synod of Vitre, in 1617, at the request of diverse persons of quality, renewed the order in the following terms; "Forasmuch as our mechanics are obliged by the King's edict to forbear working on the festivals of the Romish Church; it is left to the prudence of consistories to congregate the people on such holidays, either to hear the word preached, or to join in common public prayers, as they shall find to be most expedient." Accordingly this was frequently done, not from any conscience of the days, which they declare against, but for the opportunity of instructing the people when they were otherwise unemployed, and to prevent their spending these days in idleness or vicious practices. It seems to have been an usual custom at Charenton; and we have not a few sermons of Mr Daille, and others, preached at these times. It was the necessity and constraint arising from their circumstances that occasioned this practice, and not religious principle or choice. They condemned the imposition of these days, and the superstition accompanying them in the Papal Church, and warned their people against them; which made their Popish adversaries charge them with inconsistency in condemning Papists for the observance of such things as they allowed in the Protestants of Germany and England, particularly as to their observance of the festivals of the saints*.

In

* So Adam and Cottiby did; to which charge Daille endeavoured to make the best reply the nature of the case would admit of; which has been made a handle of by some in England, to persuade people that the French church exculpated them from all blame in their keeping Saints-days, merely because they accounted their manner of doing it not quite so intolerable as that of Papists. "Some holidays, (says Daille) I confess they observe, such as these

In the first reformation of the Belgic Churches, there is little or no appearance of festivals being regarded. They abstained from the very name of them, says Voetius. In the translation that was made of the Palatine catechism for their use, certain words which might give countenance to them, were so rendered as to exclude all other days except the Sabbath. In the ecclesiastical constitutions in 1574, it was ordained, " That the churches should be content with
 " the observation of the Sabbath, and on the Sabbaths before or after Christmas the usual subjects for sermons
 " should be treated; that the people might thus be admonished as to the abolition of this feast." In those agreed upon in the same place in 1578, was the following article: " It were to be wished, that the liberty of working six
 " days in the week which God hath allowed, might be retained in the churches, and that the Lord's day alone
 " should be kept holy. But, seeing other festivals are observed by the authority of the magistrate, the ministers
 " of the word shall endeavour by sermons, (wherein they may instruct the people particularly concerning the Nati-
 " vity, the Resurrection of Christ, the Mission of the Holy Spirit, and the like articles of faith to which they relate,) to turn that useless and hurtful holiday-keeping, or idleness into a holy and useful exercise. The ministers shall
 " do the same in cities where more festivals are kept by the authority of the magistrate. In the mean time, all the
 " churches should endeavour that the customary observation of all feasts, except those of Christmas, Easter, Ascension-day and Whitsunday, should, as far as possible, be
 " abolished with all convenient speed*." Of the festivals here excepted, the churches of the United Provinces have never yet got free†. Though, for a time, they enjoyed exemption from them; yet, they were unwillingly constrained to admit the observation of them in the manner settled in the above canon. This is one of these canons, which their celebrated Professor of Utrecht declares to be not imperative,

" these of the holy Apostles, and it may be a few others, to perpetuate the memory of their piety. But do they direct their vows, prayers or invocations to them as you do? Do they exercise any other acts of religious worship, which you offer to the saints? No; they reject and impugn them as much as we, and accuse them as will-worship and human inventions; that is to say, superstitious devotions, &c." *Relique a Mess. Adam, &c.* par. 2. c. 10. Bingham's *French Ch. Apol. for the Ch. of Engl.* b. 4. c. 7.

* Voet. *Disput.* tom. 3. p. 1308.

† Mosh. *Eccel. Hist.* vol. IV. p. 63.

perative, but permissive and limiting; as the regulation concerning the right of patronage, and some others in that Church are *. "The Synods did not of their own accord affect these days; nor did they appoint them, because they looked on the observation of them as the better course, or expected greater edification from it; but on account of the necessity imposed on them by the magistrate and the people; seeing, after all means had been tried, and the observation of them intermitted for a time, and the synodical decree passed in 1574, they could not at that time effect the abrogation, they admitted the observation in 1578, and restricted it as much as they could: Notwithstanding, at the same time they declared their wish of the contrary, and their persuasion, that the non-observation was the better and safer way; which declaration they did not repeat in the National Synod of Middleburg 1581, because they saw they gained nothing, and that the abrogation of these days was rather to be desired than hoped for."

The doctrine and practice of the Church of England on this head, are well known; and we have already more than once had occasion to refer to them. When the liturgy of that Church was settled, the observation of a number of festivals was enjoined by several statutes, which were revived in the first year of Queen Elizabeth, and continued in the first year of King James†. By the canons of the Church passed

* "Tales canones non sunt motus proprii, nec intrinseci, nec spontanei ex corde Ecclesiæ profecti; sed occasionati, extrinseci (quomodo eclipsis est propria passio lunæ) aliunde impositi, Ecclesiis onerosi, absolute et in se ingrati; ad quos concipiendos, inferendos, et quasi per modum transactionis admittendos Synodi invitæ compulsæ et coactæ fuerunt, ad maiora incommoda et mala evitanda. Haud aliter ut Nautæ, act. 27. non tantum merces ejiciebant, sed et navem in sinum quem impellebant, ut se suosque servarent," &c.

† The feasts of the Church of England are those of the Circumcision of our Lord—the Epiphany—Purification of the Virgin—St Mathias the Apostle—the Annunciation—Mark—Philip and James—Ascension—Barnabas—Nativity of John Baptist—Peter—James—Bartholomew—Matthew—Michael and all Angels—Luke—Simon and Jude—All Saints—Andrew—Thomas—Nativity of our Lord—Stephen the Martyr—John the Evangelist—the Holy Innocents—with Monday and Tuesday in Easter week—Monday and Tuesday in Whitsun week. The most of these feasts have vigils appointed to them; which are the evens or days immediately preceding them, which are enjoined to be religiously spent in fastings and nightly watchings. They are called vigils, "Quod in eis non solum jejunandum est, sed vigiliis et orationibus pernoctanter insistendum." If any of the feast days fall upon a Monday, the vigil is to be kept on the Saturday before it. Besides these, they have the fast of forty days in Lent.—The Ember days at four seasons, being the Wednesday,

passed in that reign, all manner of persons were ordered to celebrate them *according to God's holy will and pleasure*, and in the manner there prescribed. For infringing these orders several have suffered in their liberty and property. Several of the Prelatical writers and defenders of these festivals have carried their doctrine as to the authority and necessity for observing them to a most absurd and extravagant height; but this has not been generally persisted in to the present times. Had a number of good men concerned in the Reformation of England obtained their wishes, these days had been abridged, if not totally abolished. This was the judgment of Bucer, and others, who wished, "That all of them by whatever names they were honoured, whether those of saints, of the Virgin, or of Christ, might without exception be abolished, as having been introduced without any Divine warrant; but at first by a zeal of God, but not according to the Scripture."

Those distinguished by the name of Puritans in the end of Queen Elizabeth's, and the following reigns, who insisted on a reformation in government and worship, condemned the imposition and observance of these days, as appears from their writings, their supplications to the Legislature, and the histories of that time. When the hierarchy and liturgy were abolished in the time of the Long

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Parliament,

Wednesday, Friday and Saturday, after the first Sunday in Lent.—The feast of Pentecost, September 14. and Dec. 13.—The three Rogation days, which are Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday before Holy Thursday. And all the Fridays of the year except Christmas day. Besides these stated feasts and fasts, the following are prescribed by act of Parliament:—The 5th of November yearly, as a day of thanksgiving for the discovery of the Gun-powder treason,—the 29th of May, a thanksgiving for the Restoration of the Royal Family, and the Church,—and the 30th of January, a day of humiliation for the murder of Charles I. which, if it fall on a Sunday, is to be observed the day following. The Inauguration-days of the Kings and Queens for the time being, are also usually kept. They were enforced by a canon in 1640, after the example "of the godly Christian Emperors, in former times, as well as of our own most religious Princes, since the Reformation." And a particular form of prayer was appointed for that purpose. This festival was disused in Charles II.'s reign, because the day "had been changed into sorrow and fasting;" as the order for the revival of that usage in the first year of James II. bears. The festival and the service appointed for it fell again into disuse in the reign of King William, but was revived and again enjoined by a special order in the 2d year of Queen Anne, and was continued during the subsequent reigns. By the statute of Edward VI. regulating holidays, the feast of St George was also appointed to be kept on the 22d, 23d or 24th of April yearly, by the Knights of the Right Honourable order of the Garter; which was repealed by 1 Mar. 2. but revived by 1 Jac. I. cap. 25. Collier's *Eccles. Hist.* v. ii. p. 321.

Parliament, holidays were dismissed along with them *, and continued in disuse until the old fabric of superstition and tyranny was reared up again at the Restoration. At the Savoy conference, no alteration of consequence could be obtained in regard to them. Yet ever after, they were generally disregarded by the Nonconformists, as they are by the different classes of dissenters in England at present. It is true, that some of them have had sermons in their meetings on some of the anniversary days, particularly on the 5th of November, to express their joy and thankfulness, with the rest of the nation, for the deliverance remembered upon it; and also for the blessings enjoyed in consequence of the Revolution, since that took place. But this they do upon much the same principle as the Ministers in France went upon in preaching on holidays. The English Dissenters disclaim any regard to it in the light of a holiday. They consider it rather as a civil or state appointment, than an ecclesiastical. They allow no restraint to be laid on conscience, or on mens liberty of working on these days. If they did otherwise they would be self-condemned. Whether this degree of exterior conformity, either to state or church appointments, be entirely consistent with a testimony against these days, or conducive to edification, or whether they do not, at least in appearance, and according to common opinion, give some countenance to the superstitious doctrine and practice of others, it is not our design here to enquire: It belongs to such as are chargeable with such practices alone to vindicate them. It is certain some of the stricter sort have scrupled to go this length. In the time

* In 1647, the following ordinance was made; " Forasmuch as the feasts
 " of the nativity of Christ, Easter and Whitsuntide, and other festivals, com-
 " monly called holidays, have been hitherto superstitiously used and observ-
 " ed, be it ordained by the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled,
 " that the said feast of, &c. be no longer observed as festivals or holidays
 " within this kingdom of England and dominion of Wales; any law, sta-
 " tute, custom, constitution or canon to the contrary in any wise notwith-
 " standing. And to the end there may be a convenient time allotted to
 " scholars, apprentices and other servants, for their recreation, be it ordain-
 " ed, by the authority foresaid. that all scholars, &c. shall, with the leave
 " and approbation of their masters first had and obtained, have such con-
 " venient reasonable recreation and relaxation from their constant and ordi-
 " nary labours, on every 2d Tuesday in the month throughout the year, as
 " formerly they were used to have on such festivals; and that all masters
 " shall grant unto them such time as aforesaid, as they may conveniently
 " spare from their extraordinary necessary services and occasions; and if any
 " difference shall arise between any master or servant concerning the liberty
 " hereby granted, the next Justice of the Peace shall have power to order
 " and reconcile the same."

time of Charles I. when *M. de la Place* was Minister in Guernsey, which, together with its neighbouring island, had its ecclesiastical constitution formed on the Puritan model, he would neither admit the use of the liturgy in the church of St Peter's, in favour of the King's forces stationed there, nor perform a weekly lecture, which was on Thursday, when once the feast of the Nativity fell upon that day, he rather chose to disappoint the hearers, and put off the sermon, than appear to put any honour on the festival*. We find the Ministers of the Church of Scotland have sometimes been prohibited from taking such freedoms on holidays. In the National Assembly, which met in 1575, certain Ministers and readers were found fault with in the province of Aberdeen, for convening the people to sermons and public prayers on these days, and orders were given to the visitors of churches that same year, to forbid pastors to dispense the Lord's Supper upon the times supposed holy, lest hereby they should encourage the vulgar superstition.

No church, indeed, in Europe, hath kept so entirely free from any compliance with this, or hath more vigorously resisted all attempts to subject her to it. At the first settlement of her reformation, holidays were abolished without exception; and her faithful Synods and Ministers, when occasion occurred, have, in the fullest manner, both doctrinally and practically condemned the observation of them †. Her friendship and esteem for other churches did not hinder her from avowing her disapprobation of them, of which she gave a striking instance in her manner of answering the letters and requests of the Ministers in Switzerland, relative to their confession, and their exception of these in their act of approbation. In the General Assembly in 1575, it was ordained, "That all days, which heretofore have been kept holy, *viz.* Yule-day, Saints-day, and such others, be abolished, and that a civil penalty be appointed against the keepers hereof by ceremonies, banqueting, playing, and such other vanities."

But nothing can be more express on this subject, than the first head of the first Book of Discipline; "We affirm that to be contrary doctrine to the word, that man has invented, and imposed on the consciences of men, by laws, councils, and constitutions without the express command

* Heylin's *Hist. of Presbyt.* p. 399.

† *Constans hæc fuit pastorum omnium sententia, solum diem Dominicum festivum esse et Deo sacrum. Histor. Motuum in Regn. Scot.* p. 264.

“ mand of God’s word. Of this kind are,—superstitious
 “ observation of fasting days, difference of meat for con-
 “ science sake, calling upon saints, with such other inven-
 “ tions of men. In this rank, the holidays invented by
 “ men, such as Christmas, Circumcision, Epiphany, Puri-
 “ fication, and other fond feasts of our Lady, with the
 “ feasts of the Apostles, Martyrs, and Virgins, with others,
 “ which we judge utterly to be abolished forth of this
 “ realm, because they have no assurance in God’s word.
 “ All maintainers of such abominations, should be punished
 “ with the civil sword.”

In this particular at least, the declaration of Knox concerning Scotland was true, when he said, “ There is no
 “ realm that hath the like purity ; for all others, how sin-
 “ cere however the doctrine be, retain in their churches,
 “ and the ministry thereof, some footsteps of Antichrist,
 “ and dregs of Popery : But we (praise to God alone) have
 “ nothing in our churches that ever flowed from that man
 “ of sin.” The speech of King James VI. to the General
 Assembly at Edinburgh, has also been much noted ; “ I
 “ bless God I was born in such a time, as in the time of
 “ the light of the Gospel ; in such a place too, as to be the
 “ King of such a kirk, the sincerest kirk of the world. The
 “ kirk of Geneva keeps *Pasch* and *Yule*, What have they
 “ for them ? They have no institution. As for our neigh-
 “ bour kirk in England, their service is an ill-said *mass* in
 “ English : They want nothing of the *mass* but the *liftings*.
 “ I charge you, my good people, ministers, doctors, elders,
 “ nobles, gentlemen and barons, to stand to your purity,
 “ and to exhort the people to do the same. And I forsooth,
 “ so long as I bruik my life and crown, shall maintain the
 “ same against all *deadly*.”—So spake the once Puritan
 Prince, with bonnet in hand : Were such a speech now to
 come from the Throne, it would puzzle the whole House
 what return to make to it. The conscientious conformists
 to court-dialect, would for once scruple to act on principle,
 and to re-echo the speech *verbatim*. There are certain
 words in it so very harsh and crabbed, and phrases so obso-
 lete and unfashionable, that our modern Assembly Doctors
 and Orators are become entirely ignorant of the true pronun-
 ciation. Yet it is hard to say, how far such a royal speech
 might influence their *social proceedings*, and prove a *tempta-
 tion to virtue*. For to say the truth, of all speeches ever
 made by this speech-loving Monarch, this perhaps was the
 best.

best. So old-fashioned Presbyterians, at least, have usually accounted it, making allowance for his hereditary fondness for king-craft expressed in it. Had he never done or spoken any thing more foolish, he would, even with them, have almost been complimented with the name of Solomon. But he no sooner crossed the Tweed, than he shewed the sincerest kirk in the world, how king-like he meant to stand to his promise to protect her against all *deadly*. It was then, "Blessed be God's gracious goodness, who hath brought me into the promised land, where religion is purely professed, where I sit among grave and learned men, not as before elsewhere,—where beardless boys could brave us to our face." And now the ill-mumbled mass becomes heavenly music, and such as will not keep *Pasch* and *Yule*, with a long *et cetera*, must hear this royal rhetoric, *I will herrie them out of the land, or else do worse, only bang them*, that's all *. Accordingly, with the stubborn opposers of bishops, canons and holidays, in both kingdoms, he waged perpetual war more relentlessly than against the Pope himself, notwithstanding the liberal present of gunpowder which he had so kindly intended for him. To use the language of his grandfather,

He turn'd and gave them baith their paicks,
'Cause he durst ding nane other
But them that day.

The anniversary he appointed for Scotland before he left it, enjoining solemn thanks to be given to God for delivering him from a conspiracy, the reality of which many doubted, became a cause of suffering to several faithful ministers, who, for refusing to observe it, were turned out of their churches, and some of them banished to strange cities. Yet some of them were got to do the drudgery of the court in that business. Two years after the 5th of August had been consecrated by act of Parliament, in an Assembly at Edinburgh, it was agreed, That it should be solemnly kept from thenceforth, in all the churches of the kingdom. After this beginning, more of the same kind soon followed. In March 1614, the ministers were commanded by proclamation, to prepare the people for the Lord's supper, and to administer it to them on Easter-day; and the people were obliged to communicate on that day, notwithstanding several acts of Assembly formerly made against it; and next
year,

* M'Caulay's Hist. v. 1. p. 7.

year, that anniversary-solemnity was, by another proclamation, made perpetual. Next came the five articles of Perth in 1618, by the last of which four more holidays were introduced into the Church, which were also ratified by Parliament in 1621, contrary to the wishes and contendings of the well-disposed in the land, who maintained their opposition, and suffered for their nonconformity to these, and other corruptions, now imposed in defiance of former promises and securities granted to the Presbyterian Church; till the spirit of the nation was at last roused, and a complete revolution again took place.

In 1638, when the national covenant was revived and sworn by all ranks, it was accompanied with a declaration to suspend the practice of the innovations introduced, until they should be tried by a free General Assembly; which was obtained that same year, and indicted at Glasgow,—than which a more memorable never sat in the kingdom. By it the five articles were found to be not only contrary to the former laudable acts of Church and State, but inconsistent with the Covenant and Confession, and abjured therein from the beginning, under the name of “Papisty in general and “particular heads, as they had been damned and confuted “by the Word of God, and Kirk of Scotland,” notwithstanding the earnest endeavours of the King’s Commissioners to persuade or force people to subscribe the National Covenant in a different sense *. This was the sense of the whole nation :

* The act of this Assembly, so far as it concerneth festival days, “findeth, that in the explication of the 1st head of the 1st book of discipline, “it was thought good, that the feasts of Christmas, &c. be utterly abolished, “because they are neither commanded nor warranted by Scripture. Here “utter abolition is craved, and not reformation of abuses only. In the Gen. “Assembly, *an.* 1566, the large Confession of Helvetia was approved. but “with special exception against the same five days which are now urged upon us. It was not then the Popish observation only, with the Popish opinion of worship and merit, which was disallowed, (for so the reformed “kirk of Helvetia did not observe them) but *simpliciter* all observation. For “this end was read a letter, sent at that time, by some of our divines, to “certain divines in those parts, to this purpose. In the Assembly, holden “1575, complaint was made against the ministers and readers beside Aberdeen, because they assembled the people to preaching and prayers upon “certain festival days; so that preaching and prayer upon festival days “was judged rebukable. It was ordained likewise, that complaint be made “to the regent, upon the town of Dumfries, for urging and conveying a “reader to the kirk, with tabret and whistle, to read prayers all the holidays of Christmas, upon the refusal of their own reader. Among the articles directed by this Assembly to the regent, it was craved, that all holidays heretofore kept holy, beside the Lord’s day, may be abolished, and “a certain penalty appointed for banqueting, playing, feasting upon these “days.

tion: The King's measures were all baffled; and, by his edicts, these obnoxious articles were not only suspended, but rescinded. And when the Assembly met next year, the Covenant was ratified by the royal Commissioner, and enjoined to be subscribed by the whole body of the land, with the explication expressly condemnatory of the articles. After a treacherous and vain attempt by the King and his Popish party to recover what they had lost, by force of arms, in 1641, the court-innovations were again condemned; the proceedings of the nation, and of the Assemblies, in opposition to them, approved; and the public liberties ratified by laws, oaths, promises and subscriptions of the Parliament, and his Majesty present in person. How strenuously the Nation and Church of Scotland, in conjunction with the Parliament and Assembly at Westminster, supported and vindicated the Reformation they had attained to on this and other heads, for several years, in prosecution of the solemn oath and league entered into by the representatives of the three kingdoms, to that effect, and for promoting the same in the neighbouring lands; and how frequently these engagements were renewed, no lover of the liberties, or of the

“ days. In the Assembly holden 1577, it was ordained, that the visitors, with the advice of the synodal assembly, should admonish ministers, preaching or ministrating the communion at Easter or Christmas, or other like superstitious times, or readers reading, to desist under pain of deprivation. In the 9th head of the 1st book of discipline, the reason is set down against Easter-communion; *Your honours are not ignorant how superstitiously the people run to that action at Pasch, even as if the time gave virtue to the sacrament; and how, the rest of the whole year, they are careless and negligent, as if it appertained not to them but at that time only.* And for this reason other times were appointed by that book for that holy action. In the Assembly holden 1596, begun in 1595, at which time the Covenant was renewed, superstition and idolatry breaking forth in observing festival days, setting out of bone-fires, singing carols, are reckoned among the corruptions which were to be amended; and the pulpits did sound, from time to time, against all shew of observing any festival day whatsoever, except the Lord's day.”

After this faithful Assembly had examined the other four articles one by one, (which were, kneeling at the communion, confirmation and the administration of the two sacraments in private) and found them contrary to their received principles, the following vote was put: “ Whether the five articles of Perth, by the Confession of Faith, as it was meant and proposed in the year 1580, 1581, 1590, 1591, ought to be removed out of the kirk? The whole Assembly, all with one consent, one only excepted, did voice, that the five articles above specified were abjured by this kirk, in that Confession, and so ought to be removed out of it; and therefore prohibiteth and dischargeth all disputing for them, or observing of them, or any of them, in all time coming; and ordains presbyteries to proceed with the censures of the kirk against all transgressors.” *Acts of Assem. at Glasgow, 1638. Sess. 17.*

the history of his country, can be ignorant *. When at the Restoration, all these proceedings were condemned; and the acts whereby tyranny, and Popish and Prelatical corruptions had been so often condemned and abjured, were all most infamously rescinded; yet the nation never could be brought to a willing subjection to the new, or rather the old yoke, imposed. And when the national spirit of opposition was broken, a number continued boldly and faithfully to avow their adherence to all the articles of the Reformation formerly attained, unawed by terrors, by barbarous laws, and more barbarous executions. Few of the Presbyterian ministers could be prevailed on to keep the anniversary of the Restoration, which they considered as celebrating a triumph at the burial of a great and good cause, as well as a departure from the particular principle, ever maintained by the reformed Church of Scotland, concerning such days in general. Too many indeed observed it; but they were such as were disposed to swim with the tide, and were prepared for compliance with the total apostasy that ensued. As soon as the nation began to breathe a little the air of liberty again, that anniversary, and the law enjoining it, was abolished by a special act passed for that purpose immediately after the Revolution. With Prelates fell their liturgy, and favourite ceremonies; and holidays amongst the rest. From that time forward, whatever the foolish mob may have continued to do with lawless licence; or whatever the King's castles, courts of justice, banks and public offices, may have done to celebrate certain anniversaries, and to remind the nation, that such things have been or are in the world, yet the Church of Scotland (to her praise be it spoken) hath never yet solemnized one such day. If my authority is to be depended on, his Majesty's Privy-council, with advice of the judges, appointed a sermon to be preached before them on the 30th of January 1691, in St Giles' Church, and sent some

* The Parliament of Scotland in 1647, made an act *discharging the observation of superstitious days*, of the following tenor: "The Estates of Parliament considering that the observing of Yule-day, and other superstitious days, is much occasioned by coal-hewers and salters sitting and entry at Yule; therefore they ordain, that the terms of sitting and entry of all coal-hewers and salters shall hereafter be on the 1st of December yearly, discharging any entry or removal to be at Yule hereafter; inhibiting also all and every one to observe the superstitious time of Yule, or any other superstitious days, in any manner of way. and that under the pains contained in the acts of Parliament made against profanation of the Sabbath; and recommend to all whom it concerns to see this act observed, and the contraveners punished in their persons and goods condignly."

some time before a person of quality to the Commissioners of the General Assembly, to desire them in his Majesty's and the Council's name, to appoint one of their number to preach before them on that day, reminding them, that it was the anniversary of King Charles's martyrdom, and that a sermon proper to the occasion was expected, according to the laws and customs of the nation; but the Commissioners refused to comply with their request, as not chusing "to take their directions from the State, or their measures from the Council, especially in preaching anniversary sermons." But as there was a weekly lecture in the Tron-church, which fell upon the same day, Mr Shiels preached in it, and took occasion to testify against the common abuse of that day.

As a full freedom, in point of law, was obtained from the obligation of hallowing such days in Scotland, which is still enjoyed, the custom of our courts suspending business yearly, at what is called *Yule vacance*, is a voluntary act of their own. Which shew of conformity to the holiday piety of their southern neighbours, they, in their great wisdom, it seems, judge the most eligible course. This Christmas vacation was abolished in consequence of the Revolution now commemorated: It was restored again by an act passed in the tenth year of Queen Ann. In the first year of George I. when the interests of Jacobitism again received a check, another act passed to take away that vacation, which, in general, was then very offensive to Presbyterians. But in the third of George II. it was enacted, "That the Judges of the Court of Session be empowered to adjourn their session, so that they may still have a Yule Vacance, *if they see fit*."

Ah felices nimium sua si bona norint
Scotici!

If we consider the influence of the example of those in authority, and of traditionary custom prevailing among the vulgar,—and the Bacchanalian spirit of the populace, together with our familiar and long continued intercourse with a neighbouring superstitious, yet profligate nation, and if to these we add the consideration of the remains of a numerous party, yet subsisting in our land, who have ever been distinguished for a zeal of this sort, with whom holidays are observed from religious principle, is there no probable danger of this

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superstition

superstition creeping in unawares in one shape or other ; or have we not cause sufficient to put us on our guard ? The late political change in the system of those called Nonjurants, for which this present year is also distinguished, we have no reason to suppose will effect any change in their religious creed or practice. A coalition will hereby be facilitated, if not immediately accomplished, between the divided bodies of Episcopalians, whereby their interest will be greatly strengthened against the Presbyterian. To say nothing of the higher degree of favour and support, which naturally may be expected to be extended to them by Government ; since now the great bar is apparently removed, which hindered the civil powers from avowedly befriending and caressing them, as they often evidenced a fondness to do, at the time of the Revolution, and since. Before their extravagant and uncourtly politics blocked up the avenues to favour and advancement, while, at the same time, it rendered them unpopular, and less capable of hurting the interests of presbytery, against which they have a hereditary and implacable antipathy. Now they will become a little more formidable, and may prove more successful. Previous to the Rebellion in 1745, there were above 300 Nonjurant meetings in Scotland, who had received the English liturgy, with its appendages, which had not been formerly admitted even in the days of legal prelacy. When they are now become qualified for office and preferment, and appear to be coalesced, I ask again, Have we nothing to fear ?

There is nothing whereby the present year *Eighty-eight* is likely to become more memorable than the friendly approaches which the two great ecclesiastical and divided bodies of Episcopalians and Presbyterians seem to make towards each other. I am afraid, that, on our part, we have marked it down as memorable to posterity, by a practical relinquishment of an article never before conceded to the adversary. Our ecclesiastical kalendar hath hitherto remained pure. Not one ferial letter, red or black, did stain it from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. Every day retained its native hue, and shone in its natural beauty and lustre, as the Lord of time had made it. From age to age, as well as from year to year, the inhabitants of this land could do as God allowed, when he said six days shalt thou labour ; a blessing, of which perhaps no nation in the world, of whatever religion, of which few churches, if any on the face of the earth, at this day, can boast ; a privilege

privilege which some of the most favoured, some of the most eminent, have beheld with envy, and have earnestly desired to possess, but have not been able. But now we must talk no more so exceeding proudly. Our glorying, in this respect, must now become void. From this day forward, from this our year of Jubilee, our kalendar, like that of others, has received, I wish I may not say a perpetual and indelible blot. Should we then make mirth?

C H A P. XIV.

Religious Festivals anciently appointed by God.—Jewish Feasts no Warrant for Christian Festivals.—Of the Anniversary-fasts in the time of the Captivity.—The Days of Purim.—The Feast of Dedication.

DIVINE institution is requisite in order to acceptable worship. The want of this cannot be supplied by any human authority; nor by the general practice of the Church, or of the whole world. It is of no consequence, to plead the consent of nations, as an argument for the lawfulness of religious festivals, unless it appear to have been the will of God, that men should honour him in this way: Nor can we learn with certainty, what is his will as to this, but by the revelation he hath given us. The universality of this and similar practices, which cannot be properly accounted for upon any principles of reason, may afford a strong presumption, that they had their origin at first in a divine institution. But practices may be retained after the true and original reason of observation ceases, and where there remains no knowledge or sense of such institution. Festivals seem to have been a branch of the positive or ceremonial religion, warranted by God both before and under the Mosaic law; and from the primitive injunction of them, the idea of celebrating them, among the ancient nations, was probably derived, and diffused abroad, along with that of sacrifice. But that it was once the will of God that such positive and ceremonial acts of homage should be paid him, is no evidence that it is his will they should still be so. It is of the nature of such appointments to be variable, and alterable at pleasure.

Religion

Religious feasts and sacrifices, of old time, appear to have accompanied each other. In the Patriarchal ages, feasts were made on different occasions, and often attended with sacrifices. But as yet the ceremonial service, in regard of these, was not regularly settled, as to times and places. These were ordered particularly in the Jewish law, in which a variety of additions were made to the primitive and Patriarchal religion. Festivals made a noted and splendid part of that law; but they were only designed to be temporary, having served their end, in commemorating certain glorious events relating to the commonwealth of Israel, and at the same time, in typifying certain mysteries, afterwards plainly made known, they, along with other figures, vanished away. The commonwealth of Israel, and the holy city, and temple, and people, having been abolished in the establishment of the extensive and spiritual kingdom of the Messiah, these in consequence have lost all their former obligation and use. The abolition of the old ritual law, and of this part of it in particular, has been as plainly declared and notified, as the institution of it at first was. To retain these, or to return to them after the promulgation of the new law, is to doat on shadows, delight in weak and beggarly elements, and to give voluntary subjection to a heavy yoke not required; nay farther, it is a contempt of the divine mandate, not to touch, taste, or handle these perishable and unprofitable ordinances; and is even interpretatively a denial of the truth of the Gospel, and the grace of Jesus Christ. To return to Judaism, in this view, is no better than to be conformists to heathenism. And on this account doth the Apostle so severely reprove such as were guilty of this; and this was one of the instances and evidences of their falling from grace, their observing days, months and years. Whether these words refer to the old Jewish days and festivals, once of divine authority, now no more so; or to others devised in their place, under a shew of accommodation to Christianity, they are equally applicable. It is not reasonable to suppose, that Christ and his Apostles, in abrogating the old days, without giving a system of ordinances of the same kind in their place, intended, that Christian churches, or individuals, should be allowed to substitute whatever they pleased in their room.

It is therefore vain to seek a warrant for instituting festivals, and days of religious commemoration under the Gospel, from any command or institution of that kind, under the

the Old Testament : As when Israel were enjoined to observe the night of their exit from Egypt, in all their generations ; and to keep the passover as a memorial : Or when they were ordered to remember, record, or rehearse the acts and works of the Lord, and the like. This is to forget the distinction between the old and new dispensation ; and to forget that the Jews themselves were never authorised to institute such days or memorials for themselves, but to keep those which God had expressly, and by name, set apart and sanctified : Whereas Christians have none of these marked out by him in that manner for their observance ; and the prohibitory sanction is equally strict under both testaments, " Whatsoever I command you, observe to do : thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."

Against this, the practice of the captives appointing fasts on the 4th, the 5th, the 7th and 10th months, in commemoration of so many calamities which had befallen that people*, has been adduced. If the Church might appoint anniversary fasts with approbation, there is equal warrant for appointing days in memory of happy deliverances ; nay, these fasts were changed by the divine authority into joyful feasts which implies an approbation of them. But the reasoning is inconclusive. These fasts referred to extraordinary providences, or a series of calamities present, as well as past, which, doubtless, called for serious and frequent exercises of this kind ; according to the direction of former prophets and the warrant of their law. Had they neglected to do so, they had been blameable. Nor was their continuing in these from year to year, while lying under the pressure of the Divine judgments reprehensible ; for such a continuance there were still present calls and occasions in providence. But whether they were culpable in restricting them to certain days, and perhaps appropriating to so many past and distinct events, is not expressly said. If they were warranted in making them stated, as others in their law, they must have been directed herein by some endued with a prophetic spirit which still remained among them. If they erred in this, their error will establish no good precedent ; and though they had not, yet it is not clear, that they could herein be a proper precedent to the Church now so differently constituted, and under such different circumstances. But some error certainly there was in the solemnization of these annual fasts, either in regard of the manner of observation,

or

* Zech. vii. 3. viii. 19.

or their institution, or both. The Prophet's answer is expressed, in very strong terms of censure and disapprobation; and some, not without apparent reason, suppose they are found fault with both for appointing them without due authority, as well as for the improper manner of keeping them. *When ye fasted and mourned these 70 years, did ye at all fast unto me, even unto me * ?*

But the most plausible argument for festivals of human institution is drawn from the Jewish feasts of *Purim* and the *Dedication*. These, it is said, were observed as anniversaries, the one in memory of the preservation of the Jews from the wicked conspiracy of Haman; the other, as is usually supposed, in commemoration of the restoration of the temple-service, and the deliverance from Antiochian tyranny in the time of Judas Maccabæus: Yet we do not find that they were instituted by any special direction from God, but by the authority of the governors civil or ecclesiastic. This is indeed the strong hold which all the defenders of festivals, and of the ordinary power of the Church to institute them have recourse unto, and here they think they may securely fortify themselves, and bid defiance to all attempts to dislodge them. It is here the Bellarmines, the Whitgifts, the Hookers, the Nicols, and an endless list of names, have vaunted so much. But their confidence has as often been proved to be vain by names as respectable.

An account is given of the institution and celebration of the feast of *Purim* or *Lots*, in a sacred book. This circumstance shows, at least, that it is not impossible nor improbable, that it should derive its origin from an authority divine. An extraordinary spirit was doubtless yet remaining in the Church: Otherwise, it had not been recorded by an inspired writer. Some have supposed Mordecai to have been the writer of that book, as well as the proposer of this feast. Though the former is not certain, yet from the character

* Their profaneness and irreligion did bear more bulk in the prophet's eye than their superstition. I indeed call for a proof that no more is here reprov'd but their wrong way of going about these fasts.—The management of this solemnity was evil; that cannot prove these holidays to have been accepted; for on that account they are expressly disowned: The controversy is about the authority by which they were appointed, viz. the church's: We say that could never make them good: He saith it doth; here then is an affirmative that he must prove: But for this once I shall prove that these fasts are disowned on this account also. This action is simply condemned; the Lord looketh not on it as done to him. In general, all religious acts or solemnities which have no Divine authority are condemned, 1 Kings xii. 33. Jer. vii. 31. Mat. xv. 9. &c. Rule's *Good Old Way*, p. 222.

rafter given of him, and the work in which he was fo fuccefsfully employed, and the dignity to which he was raifed, we have reafon to conclude, that he was endowed with no ordinary fpirit. What was publicly tranfacted under himfelf, or by his order, might be the refult of fpecial motion, or divine direktion. No fault is found with the Jews for this feftivity, either as unfeafonable or unwarranted. Hence fome fcruple, not to hold it to have been divinely enjoined, at leaft fufficiently approved, in the beginning, though afterwards corrupted. But if this be allowed, it deftroys the argument in favour of the caufe which it is meant to ferve. What fimilarity is there between prophets and ordinary teachers? or between favours raifed up in an extraordinary manner to protect or to direct the affairs of a commonwealth or church, and the ordinary governors of either? or what certain argument can be deduced from a conftitution fo unlike, and from cafes and acts fo very different from thofe to which they are compared? The feafting here appears to have been rather carnal than fpiritual; and the anniversary, if one was appointed, rather political than religious*.

Many fuppofe that here was no proper religious feftival at all: but an indulgence of outward mirth, and fuch expreffions of uncommon joy, as were customary among that people, and which the prefent occurrences of providence rendered allowable†. But that there was neither any divine command given for it, nor was it needful in order to warrant it: nor was any obligation impofed upon them to keep it as an act of religion at its firft celebration, much lefs as an inftitution to be obferved inviolably in future times.— Agreeable to this, it is obferved, that nothing peculiarly facred is mentioned as belonging to the celebration of thefe days, but eating and drinking, rejoicing, and fending portions

* Magistratum hic politicum quid fpectaffe manifeftè textus indicat. Etiam tempora veteris Teftamenti a N. Teftamenti temporibus di- inguenda funt. Kuchlin. in *Catech. Holl.*

† Videmus itaque dies Purim fuiffe tantum dies civiles feu politicos lætitiæ et convivii. Ne vel fœviam fimplicem ex hoc loco evincere poffunt adverfarii, nedum diem feftum tribus illis elementis, conftitutum. Non igitur temere fcripfit Hofpinienus, cum dixit, *In fefto Purim operari prohibitum non eft*: Liberum enim erat illis operari quantum convivia et hilaria agitando non impediabantur. *Calderw. Alt. Dam.*

“ They agreed to keep thefe two days annually as feftivals, as they had “ at this time done, not in a religious, but in a civil way; not as parts of “ religious worfhip and as additions to and innovations of their law, but “ by way of commemoration of a civil benefit which they had received.” *Gill Com. on Eft. ch. ix.*

tions to one another; that it doth not appear that they were restricted from their ordinary work; but they rested from the trouble and sorrow to which before they were exposed: though the Jews afterwards, in their synagogue introduced a liturgy, in some things, a very ridiculous one too, yet there was no such thing commanded or used in the time of Mordecai: the people seem to have come into a voluntary agreement to keep these days with gladness for the present, and take upon themselves, of their own accord, to preserve the memory of this joyful event in the same manner hereafter. In this view of the matter, the argument is equally spoiled. Though men may be allowed to introduce some new laws, customs or practices into civil life, or to observe rites or days of annual commemoration, such as are proper to a temporal deliverance*. It doth not follow, that they may use the same liberty with respect to the worship of God. Political and temporal affairs are more left to the will and discretion of men than spiritual.

After all, many of the Jews themselves have doubted of the warrantableness of this, and have feared it might have been an innovation. Lightfoot tells us, from a Jewish book; "That there were 85 elders, above 30 of which were prophets too, that made their exceptions against the feast of Purim, ordained by Esther and Mordecai, as some kind of innovation against the law †."

It is certain that many ridiculous rites, came afterwards to be used on it, as beating with mallets at the mention of the name of Haman, and executing him in effigy upon a gallows. It has been no less infamous in modern times, for the licentiousness and excess that accompanies it: so that it has been often and justly called the Jewish Bacchanalia; and it is become a saying among them, that a man is bound at the feast of Purim, to exhilarate or inebriate himself, until he does not know the difference between *curfed be Haman*, and *bleffed be Mordecai*.

This may be suspected, and even affirmed of the feast of Dedication, the other instance adduced. The same author wonders that they should question the other which lasted but two days, and yet should swallow so easily this of Dedication

* "Beneficia temporalia vel in ecclesiam vel in rempublicam collata sunt.
" Si in rempublicam politica habent media et instrumenta conservandi memoriam beneficii. Pyrae aut facies accensae non sunt signa laetitiae ecclesiae
" sica et sacra, sed civilia."

† Leight. Works, v. ii p. 578.

tion which continued for eight days, and had no other foundation of authority, but that of the Scribes. It was introduced about the 148th year of the Seleucidæ; and, at that time, nay, a great while before, the doctrine of traditions, and the authority of the traditional Scribes had got a great sway in the nation; and, at that time, there was not so much as one prophet throughout the whole land. Not a little is to be found in the Talmudic writers about the institution, and manner of celebration of it, favouring of superstition: "When the Greeks entered into the temple," they say, "they defiled all the oil that was there. But "when the kingdom of the Asmoneans had conquered them, they fought, and could not find but one single vial of oil that had been laid up under the seal of the chief priest; nor was there enough in it but to light for one day. There was a great miracle, for they lighted up the lamps from that oil for eight days together; so that the year after they instituted the space of eight days for solemnizing that feast." It was called the Feast of *Lights*, from the custom of lighting up candles in every house; one candle the first night of the feast, two the second, three the third, and so on, till, on the eighth day, there were, at least, eight candles burning in every house; sometimes they lighted up a candle the first night for every person in a house, and increased them in proportion, so that in a family of ten persons, on the eighth day, there were eighty candles burning. One would think there should be little account made of such a festival.

But it is said, did not our Lord countenance this festival, by coming to the temple to worship at it? This is not affirmed. "*It was at Jerusalem, the feast of the Dedication, and it was winter: And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.*" "He walked there, says Lightfoot, because it was winter, that he might get and keep himself warm; perhaps he chose Solomon's porch to walk in, either that he might have some thing to do with the Fathers of the Sanhedrim who sat there, or else that he might correct and chastise the buyers and sellers, who had their shops in that place." And we may add, perhaps for the sake of meeting with the people that resorted to Jerusalem and the temple at that time, that he might instruct them; otherwise it was not needful that he should be at Jerusalem for the sake of the feast, which could have been equally well observed in Galilee.

At any rate, the proof that is brought from thence of his joining in this feast, and approving of its institution, is very lame: If I have walked in the porch of St Pauls, when the feast of St Michael is celebrating within, or if I have peeped into Lambeth or Greenwich chapel, when the Isaac Parson, clothed in his white mystical garments is officiating, am I therefore approving of the feast of St Michael, of surplices and common prayer? I have perhaps walked about the environs of the Synagogue, when the Jews were gathering together with wains full of palm branches, to keep their autumnal festival: Have I therefore come on purpose to worship at the Synagogue, and to keep the feast of Tabernacles?

C H A P. XV.

The Anniversary-Thanksgiving, as relating peculiarly to the Revolution.—Of the Principles and Settlement of the Revolution.

HITHERTO we have abstracted from any respect to the special object in view in the present Commemoration. The reasoning has proceeded on a more general ground, and would equally apply to any day of the same kind, for whatever particular purpose designed. The objections urged would be equally strong against an anniversary-day for commemorating the redemption of mankind by the Son of God, or the first propagation of the Gospel of Peace among the nations, or the happy dawn of Protestant Reformation in later times, as against the present. But were we to examine the special object of this appointment, namely, the Revolution, and the grounds assigned by the Assembly for the solemn thanksgivings of that day *, new and additional grounds

* The act of Assembly bears, That “ the Assembly recollect, with gratitude to Almighty God, the happy and glorious event. that. in the year “ 1688, (of which the present year is the secular anniversary) delivered the “ nation from civil and religious oppression, set proper bounds to the royal “ prerogative, secured the liberties and just rights of the people, and established to this National Church all the religious rights and privileges “ which she now enjoys under the illustrious house of Hanover; that, being “ fully convinced, that the principles of the Revolution-settlement are the “ only foundation on which the security of the throne and the happiness of “ the people can be permanently established, they think themselves called “ upon by their duty to God,” &c.

grounds of scruple might arise. We might probably find the transaction referred to, at least the principles and proceedings apparent in it, and the effects resulting from it, held forth in language of praise too indiscriminate and unlimited. Principles might be found to be applauded, which the principles of this Church condemn; and a settlement, represented as matter of solemn thanksgivings, and as the only foundation of the security of the throne, and of the happiness of the people, which, in many respects, may be very much the reverse.

The Assembly appears not to preserve the due distinction between the deliverance of the Revolution, and the principles and settlement of the Revolution,—between the work of God and that of men in this matter. In the former sense, it was indeed great and glorious, just and good, and deserving wonder and praise to the latest time. An opportunity was hereby afforded, if it had been properly improved, for more abundant blessings, and for giving a higher security to the throne, and a more permanent happiness to the people, than we can yet boast of. In the latter sense, a Presbyterian Assembly ought to speak of it in terms of greater moderation and reserve. So far as the principles which teach the lawfulness of resisting and deposing tyrants, and re-assuming lost liberties were asserted and practised;—so far as the civil and religious liberties of subjects were vindicated, in opposition to the horrid laws and persecuting measures of the preceding reigns, and the Protestant religion secured, the justness of the encomium may be allowed. But when both the principles and proceedings of those who conducted it, are reviewed, and the settlement to which national affairs were brought, we will find very much to censure, as well as applaud. Many things to excite humiliation as well as thanksgiving. When that settlement is viewed in opposition to the system of tyranny, and the general perversion of law, justice and religion, in the period immediately preceding, our gratitude must rise, and we may justly say, the Lord hath done great things for us, turning back a long captivity, as streams of water in the south; but when we view it in comparison with another system of principles and measures formerly adopted, and another settlement made and established by civil and ecclesiastical laws, in a preceding period of Scotland's reformation, it may awaken such sentiments and exercise as certain ancient men were noted for of old, when they beheld the second temple, and perceived

perceived its inferiority to the former. As a settlement merely civil, it may deserve higher degree of commendation, than when considered in an ecclesiastical light, which ought surely to be principally attended to by a Church Assembly.

What if principles of a wiser policy, of more extended liberty, of a purer reformation, will be found in many instances to have been herein exploded? What if principles diametrically opposite to these, will be found not only to have possessed and actuated the minds of the actors, but also to have been interwoven with, and infused into the constitution or settlement then made? If instead of adopting the principles, and pursuing the measures of the noble set of patriots and reformers, who had done so much in the end of Charles I.'s reign, to refine and settle the constitution, civil and ecclesiastical, on a sure basis, for the preservation and advancement of true religion, and the lasting happiness of Prince and people, these shall be found to have been deserted and thwarted:—If Revolutionists held the lawfulness and good policy of bestowing the regal government, when in their hands, without insisting on terms reckoned highly necessary for the security of religion, and the happiness of the nation, and in contradiction to a laudable law, declared fundamental in all time coming:—If instead of punishing or turning out of office many who had been avowed supporters of tyranny, and abettors of, or agents in persecution, whose hands were deeply stained with the blood of the innocent and the good, they were in the new constitution allowed to enjoy power, places and honours, in violation of solemn laws and oaths to the contrary:—If at the time of repealing many wicked laws, others equally bad were designedly left unrepealed:—If instead of reviving and re-inforcing a variety of excellent laws, rescinded and suspended through the iniquity of the preceding times, they left them under their former disability and condemnation, and devised others in their place, in many things incompatible with them:—If instead of adequately asserting the honour of these great names who had suffered patriotism, religion and a good conscience, and had been publicly stigmatized as rebels, and instead of vindicating the credit, and restoring the authority of famous Parliaments, and faithful Assemblies, they left them, together with their acts, overwhelmed and buried under their unjust sentence, and suffered to bear the stigma of perpetual infamy:—If instead of avoiding all encroachments

ments on the Church's spiritual independence, and every instance of usurpation of the legislative authority of her exalted King, they assumed and exercised a sort of Ecclesiastical Supremacy, enacted a system of faith, worship and government, without the advice or previous decision of Church-rulers, and without taking any notice of previous acts of this reformed Church, in her regular and lawful assemblies, or of acts of reforming Parliaments on the same subjects:—If a form of Church-government was established, without any proper acknowledgment of its divine institution, as a mere political measure, for the sake of peace, and to gratify the inclinations of a people, in such a manner, and on such grounds as would equally admit of others:—If a ruder and less perfect model of the Presbyterian constitution, than what had once been enjoyed in Scotland, in consequence of a maturer experience, of long contentings and great expence:—If instead of receiving a Confession of Faith, a Directory for Worship, and a Form of Government and Discipline, which was designed as a part of a Christian, liberal and charitable plan of more extensive reformation and ecclesiastical unity, in which view they had been formerly authorised, and solemnly engaged to, they re-admitted them, on the narrow and absurd plan of a local and national religion, relinquishing the former design, giving a tacit consent to their being dropped and banished from the neighbouring lands, and so constructively approving of the restoration and legal maintenance of the hierarchy, with all the tyranny, superstitious ceremonies and rites attendant upon English Prelacy, equally unfriendly to the interests of religion and morality, and the civil rights of men, even after they had been once happily rejected and abjured, being abolished in all the three kingdoms by civil and ecclesiastical laws:—If instead of performing solemn oaths and stipulated covenants with God and their neighbours, in this and other respects, they were wilfully disregarded, and *de facto* violated, denied, and the performance of them on the new plan of settlement and union rendered impracticable:—If, in fine, the Revolution principles and constitution be compatible with the Erastian attempts to destroy the independence, to restrain the freedom, and interrupt the proceedings of Church-courts in their proper business:—If they admit of the dissolution of National Assemblies at the pleasure of the Prince;—of the imposition of a prescribed formula, and terms for receiving the scandalous into communion;

munion;—of Princes swearing contradictory oaths in regard to religion;—of nations bound to the same reformation, joining and swearing to treaties together, on the mutual conditions of maintaining perpetually two distinct and opposite forms of religion;—of Presbyterians conforming to the Prelatical Church, when interest requires;—of their swearing to maintain the hierarchy, and the Ecclesiastical Supremacy over it;—of patronage-laws, and the abolition of the unalienable rights of a free Christian people:—If such be the principles, and such the constitution secured to us by this Revolution, who, that knows the import of them, will dare to join in returning solemn thanks for these as public blessings, as the only foundation of public security and happiness?

If farther we judge of the Revolution privileges of the National Church, from her Ministers and Assemblies tamely submitting to the greater part of the above evils, receiving the model of their ecclesiastical constitution, as delivered to them by the civil powers;—if instead of asserting ancient privileges, and adhering to their religious obligations;—if instead of condemning the above defects, and asserting truths explicitly in opposition to these evils;—if instead of censuring and purging out the scandalous, they join in affinity with them, and not only decline fidelity themselves, but discountenance those who remind them of it;—if, in a word, we judge of the progress of reformation in doctrine, godliness or morals, since that celebrated æra, and from the present aspect of our former glorious Church;—shall we say the change has, in every view, been a happy one for Scotland.

To confirm and illustrate these hints at length, would exceed our time and our intended limits. We shall only add, that the time was, since the Revolution, when the half of the Ministers of Scotland would have started at any act adopting, in such a full and unlimited manner, the Revolution settlement, and the principles on which it is founded. Many of her eminent sons, in public and in private stations, saw, acknowledged, and much regretted the defects, the unfaithfulness, and unhappiness of that settlement, with reference to the best interests of our reformed Church. Thus writes one, who still adhered to the Revolution-church, soon after the event, in a letter before his death in 1700, with whose words we conclude, “ The conception you
“ have of the dispensation of the Lord towards this poor
“ plagued

“ plagued Church, and the temper of the spirits of professors
 “ under this dispensation, are not different from what many
 “ of the Lord’s people are groaning under. There is pal-
 “ pably a sensible difference between what the Church now
 “ is, and what it was many years ago, yea, what it hath
 “ been within these few years. The Church hath lost much
 “ ground, and is still upon the losing hand, and, it seems,
 “ will continue so, until it pleases the Lord to pour down his
 “ spirit from on high, or else by some sharp awakening dis-
 “ pensation, rouse up drowsy souls out of the lethargy, where-
 “ in they are fallen.—It is many years since the sun fell low
 “ upon Scotland, many a dismal day hath it seen since
 “ 1649. At that time our reformation mounted towards
 “ its zenith; and since we left our building on that excel-
 “ lent foundation, laid by our honoured forefathers, we have
 “ still moved from ill to worse, and are like still more to do,
 “ until we slide ourselves out of sight and sense of a re-
 “ formation. We have been lately tristed with a wonder-
 “ ful deliverance from the slavery of a heaven-daring ene-
 “ my, *but not one line of reformation is pencilled upon our de-*
 “ *liverance.* We have the shell of ordinances and church-
 “ government, but want the kernel, the great things of
 “ Christ’s law, as to contend for his interest, is wrapt un-
 “ der a cloud, * &c.

* Lett. of Mr J. Dickson.

F I N I S.



